January/February 2005 ISSUE

Be Prepared
Personal Planning

PAGE 4-8

Central Alternative

A Publication for Central PA's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community.

Gay & Lesbian Market to Reach $610 Billion in 2005

A new report says the US gay and lesbian consumer market is both diverse and significant, according to the fourth edition of "The US Gay and Lesbian Market" by the market research firm Packaged Facts and Witeck-Combs Communications. The report will prompt interest from the corporate world

The report says the buying power of the US gay and lesbian population is projected to reach $610 billion in 2005. There are an estimated 15 million adult gay and lesbian buyers in the US.

Chance Mitchell, from the National Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, called the report's buying power projections "right on," and said companies are showing "an overwhelming interest." Many states nationwide promote gay-friendly policies as a means to attract corporate interests. Meanwhile, Pennsylvania languishes in slash and burn mode regarding gay civil rights.

"I think the (lgbt) consumer is going to start thinking about companies that are buying back from our community, not just marketing to our community," he said. Mitchell told the PlanetOut Network that IBM, Wells Fargo, Motorola, Intel, JPMorganChase, Cendant and Wyndham Hotels & Resorts are some of the companies that are taking steps to purchase goods and services from lgbt-owned businesses.

The report also revealed a high degree of diversity within the gay and lesbian population - including singles, families, seniors and people of color. At least 2 million gays are approaching or have already reached retirement age, according to the report. By 2020, some 5.7 million, or 25 percent of the gay community, will be 50 or older.

The report also estimates that there are 1.8 million gay and lesbian households with children, and there are approximately 2.6 million children living with gay parents.

The complexity of the gay and lesbian population reveals that "day care and taxes and retirement accounts occupy as much a priority role as travel, fashion and home decor once did," according to Don Montuori, an editor for Packaged Facts.

"Gay households should never be over-simplified," says Bob Witeck, CEO, Witeck-Combs Communications. "Growing trends of acceptance and respect throughout society make it possible - even essential - for more gays and lesbians to safely self-identify and to vote not only with their ballots but also with their dollars in the market."

Central Sighting – Harrisburg – Gay pioneers Dr. Lilli Vincenz, the Rosa Parks of the gay-rights movement, Frank Kameny, and Barbara Gittings spoke to a crowd at the PA State Museum. "Keep your rhetoric in order, don't compromise, take your position aggressively and firmly, be articulate and practice your sound bites," Kameny said.

Story on Page 5

Emily Novakowski Given SPARC Award

SPARC, the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition, congratulates Emily Novakowski of Forty Fort, near Wilkes-Barre, as its 2004 Lifetime Achievement Award winner. Novakowski's advocacy of lgbt issues in northeast Pennsylvania is as well known as it is extensive.

As a member of Reach, northeast Pennsylvania's first organization for gays and lesbians, Novakowski identified the need for starting a local chapter of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG). Through her tireless efforts and boundless energy, Novakowski has created a welcoming environment for families and

continued on page 4

Central Sighting – Harrisburg – The Rev. Al Sharpton, a strong supporter of gay civil rights, visited Harrisburg during the presidential campaign. "Human rights is for everybody," he said that day. Many African-American leaders do not support gay civil rights.

Republicans Challenge Local Black Precincts

By Ted Sawchuck

On Election Day, Republicans used legal challenges with no basis in Pennsylvania law to have Democratic poll workers removed

continued on page 4

Region's Gay & Lesbian Needs to be Assessed

A public meeting is planned for Wednesday, January 12 at 6 p.m. at Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, 2973 Jefferson Street, Harrisburg to assess the needs of the

continued on page 5

Disproves myths

Study of Black Same-Sex Households Released

The first-ever in-depth study of US African-American same-sex households reveals high rates of parenting and income disparities, according to a study by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute and the National Black Justice Coalition.

"This study disproves the myth that all gay people are white, wealthy, and have unstable relationships without children," said Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman.

The study shows that black lesbian couples are raising children at almost the same rate as black married couples, and that black same-sex couples raise children at twice the rate of white same-sex couples.

Black same-sex couples also earn less, are less likely to own a home, and are more likely to hold public sector jobs. For all these reasons, black same-sex couples have more to gain from the legal protections

continued on page 4

Central Sighting – Sparky's Coffee - Amy Trout and Chef Dennis prepare rich flavors and brimming scents of percolating java at Sparky's Coffee, 1 N. Third St., Harrisburg (717-909-9922), a three-year-old coffee break haven amidst the downtown bustle. The friendly shop offers a large selection of in-house roasted beans and exotic of flavors - espressos, cappuccinos, lattes, Americanos, mochas and interesting teas delight and adventurous pallet. Sparky's offers daily assortments of fresh baked muffins, cookies and biscotti. Soups made from scratch are served daily after 11 a.m. Hours: M-F 6:30 a.m/6 p.m. Sat. 9 a.m./ 5 p.m. Closed Sun

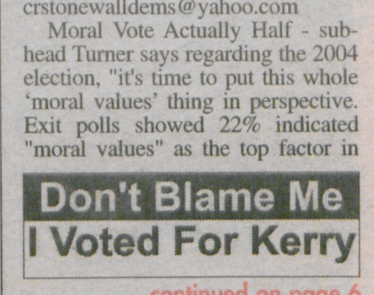
Capital Region Stonewall Democrats Look Past Election

After helping John Kerry win Pennsylvania in their first year of existence, Capital Region Stonewall Democrats now look beyond the 2004 election and ahead to local and state elections. The group will focus on two key 2006 campaigns: Re-electing Gov. Ed Rendell and defeating anti-gay U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, says co-chairman Ben Turner.

The group will also work to prevent the return of anti-gay amendments in the Pennsylvania state legislature.

As an initial statement of defiance and as a way to raise funds to support pro-gay and defeat anti-gay candidates, CRSD is selling "Don't Blame Me - I Voted for Kerry" bumper stickers. The stickers are blue and white to reflect the unofficial Democratic color of blue. The colors should suit any Penn State fan. They're $3 each or two for $5. Larger orders, contact: crstonewalldems@yahoo.com

Moral Vote Actually Half - subhead Turner says regarding the 2004 election, "it's time to put this whole 'moral values' thing in perspective. Exit polls showed 22% indicated "moral values" as the top factor in



continued on page 6

Profile
Woody's Karaoke Star Barbara Rocco Talks to Philadelphia Correspondent Jesse Smith

PAGE 9

York Little Theatre Presents "Laramie" Plus Panel & Vigil

PAGE 15

Capital BlueCross Pops Series

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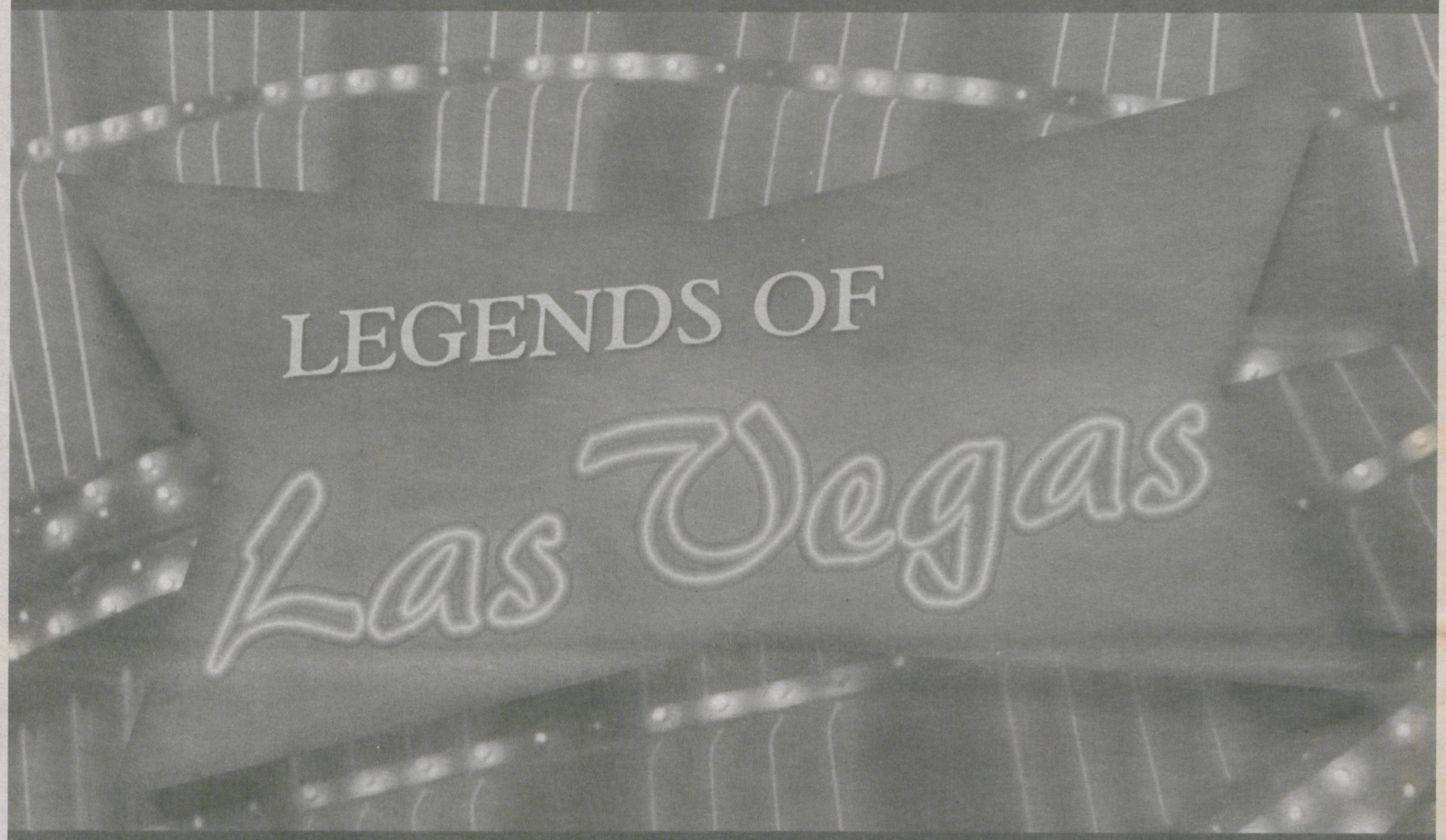

Saturday, January 29, 2005 • 8 p.m.
Sunday, January 30, 2005 • 3 p.m.

Please join us as Capital BlueCross Pops presents the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra with Maestro Stuart Malina at The Forum, Downtown Harrisburg. The Forum is transformed into a showroom at the Sands Hotel and the HSO into the Harrisburg Swing Band as brothers Stuart and Joel Malina celebrate the music of Mel Torme, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Frank Sinatra.

Call The Box at (717) 214-ARTS
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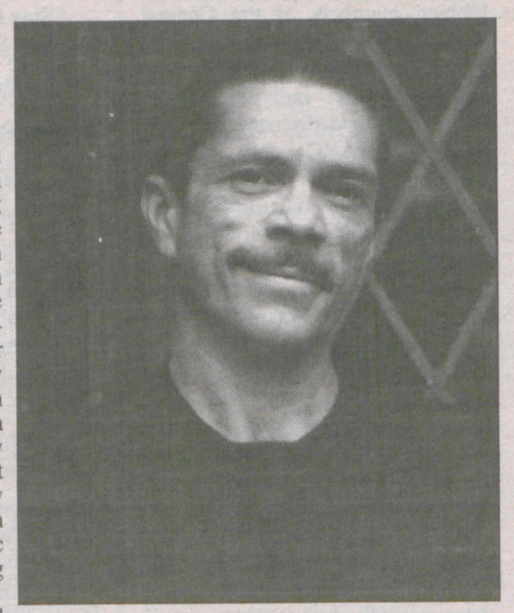
Publisher's Letter: A Gay Man's Moral Issues

Record Level of Americans Uninsured & Poor

by Frank Fizzoli, Publisher



Rising health coverage costs and fewer workers in employer-sponsored health plans pushed a 1.4 million increase in the uninsured last year, according to the US Census Bureau. The total number of uninsured now stands at 45 million or 15.6% of the US population. This is a moral issue for me. I'd like to get the issue onto the Red State's agenda for action, since so many of those who live in those states do not have health care coverage themselves.

More than 10 million without insurance are young people, 25 to 34 years old, an increase of 576,000 from 2002. "Young adults got hammered," says Urban Institute health economist John F. Holahan. There were 20.6 million uninsured full-time workers last year, the Census Bureau says, an increase of 1.6 million over two years.

I suspect that most of these companies are run by Republicans who donate money to organizations preaching "values" to the rest of us. Those uninsured kids among their employed families would be off if their corporate masters "valued families" more than they preached "family values." Senate majority leader Bill Frist, R-Tenn., said the numbers reflected "a decade-long downward trend in the proportion of Americans who receive health insurance through their employers." Some family value, huh?

God Loves Poor People

Adding weight to an already heavy load carried by the nation's workforce – recently hit with overtime restrictions on pay – the Census Bureau also notes that more Americans were "poor" as of 2003. The ranks of the poor AND those without health insurance grew in 2003 for the third straight year. A family of two adults and two children with an income of less than $18,660 is considered poor. Poverty is another of my moral issues.

The national poverty rate rose to 12.5% in 2003, from 12.1% in 2002. After dropping rapidly following the 1960s government war on poverty, from more than 22 percent then, the rate has changed relatively little over the last four decades. It was slightly higher in 2003 than in 1969. "We have had a generation with basically no progress against poverty," says University of Michigan's Sheldon Danziger. "The economic growth is not trickling down to the poor."

I guess these dismal numbers reflect marketplace expressions of "compassionate conservative" put into place by White House policies. After all, God loves poor people. That's why he makes so many of them year after year.

Or do our economic and social policies force families into poverty?

Median household income rose at about the same rate as inflation last year after three years of relative declines, according to the report. Disparities in incomes between the rich and poor grew after having fallen in 2002. Pay did not keep pace with inflation in the South, already the nation's poorest region, in cities, or among immigrants. And the wage gap between men and women widened for the first time in four years.

Depending on political beliefs, economists place varying portions of "blame" for the rise in poverty on single-parent families, a withering of good jobs for people without college degrees and a shift away from anti-poverty programs by the federal government. We used to blame women who were raped too. No mention of "outsourcing" of jobs as the possible culprit.

Family Values?

Daily in the US, 2,500 children are abused or neglected, and three of these children are killed. Eighty-one percent of this abuse is committed by a parent and seven percent by a relative. Family violence occurs in about 2 million families annually.

Approximately 3.5 million people are homeless, and 39 percent of these people are children. Half of all homeless women and children were fleeing male perpetrators of domestic violence. A woman is raped approximately every two minutes, and 68 percent of these rapes are committed by a person she knows. Every day three women are murdered by a boyfriend or husband.

Who values families by their actions? Who only preaches family values?

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Central to your life.

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Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,
As a loyal Alternative Central reader, I look forward to the newspaper's informative articles. Kudos to a first class publication!

A loyal reader

Dear Editor,
Thank you for all the work this year on the newspaper. It is a real service to the community.

Michael Snow

Ohio Governor Gets It, Why Not PA General Assembly?

For the November 2 prexy election, Ohio had an anti-gay marriage initiative on its ballot. And although the gay political football was passed all around Ohio's playing field, the weekend before the election, Governor Bob Taft questioned the wisdom of banning gay marriage.

Taft said passage of the measure could "make it more difficult for us to retain and attract the young, talented, knowledgeable workers we need to advance Ohio's prosperity in the 21st century." If a conservative governor like Taft understands, why can't the PA General Assembly figure it out?

Newspage

Gay Lawyer Heads Phila. Bar Association

Andrew A. Chirls, the first openly gay lawyer elected to lead any state or major city bar association, recently took over the reins of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

"I think that says something about the bar association and this city. I think it also says something to a lot of people who think they don't have a future or a place in this society," said Chirls, a litigation partner at the firm of Wolf, Block, Schorr & Solis-Cohen.

Chirls, 48, graduated from the law school of the University of California, Berkeley, in 1981. It was there that he met his partner, Larry Frankel, who is now the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania. Last year, after 25 years together, the couple exchanged rings at a wedding ceremony.

In addition to his work with the Philadelphia bar, Chirls has served on the Philadelphia Commission on Human Relations and the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund's national board, and was the founding chair of the Philadelphia Bar Association's committee on the legal rights of lesbians and gay men. Chirls also successfully argued the first jury trial in Pennsylvania based on HIV/AIDS discrimination.

Ohio University Grants Same-Sex Benefits

Unlike the ongoing battle in Pennsylvania, health insurance benefits will be extended to same-sex domestic partners of Youngstown State University employees under a resolution approved by the Board of Trustees on Thursday.

YSU becomes the fifth public university in Ohio to extend health benefits to same-sex domestic partners, joining Ohio University, Miami University, Cleveland State and Ohio State.

The resolution authorizes YSU to offer medical, vision, dental and prescription coverage to an eligible employee's same-sex domestic partner and his/her dependent children.

The YSU administration will consult with leaders of the university's four employee unions to discuss incorporating benefits for same-sex domestic partners into the union contracts.

Same-sex Couples Fit Group's Profile

Walking into the Downtown Durham YMCA to pick up her daughter, Betsy Bartonfinds comfort knowing that she and her partner are members of an organizationthat no longer discriminates against diverse family structures. She was one of several concerned members who joined forces to form YMCA for All.

The organization was started by a group of gay and straight members who wished to expand family membership rates to address the needs of alternative families, including gay and lesbian couples, single-parent families and other legal guardians and their children.

"The definition of family is much broader than what the traditional church has defined it to be," said Duke University law student Teresa Sakash, member of YMCA for All.

The issue arose when the Downtown Durham YMCA joined with the YMCA of the Triangle Area, a group that now includes 13 area branches. Under the previous policy, gay and lesbian couples were not included in the family rate and paid a difference of more than $500 a year, Sakash said. "It really hurts the kids," she said. "It says that your family is not a family." A small group's activism changed all that.

Pentagon Cuts Boy Scouts from Bases

The Pentagon recently agreed to warn military bases worldwide not to directly sponsor Boy Scout troops, partially resolving claims that the government has engaged in religious discrimination by supporting a group that requires members to believe in God.

The settlement is part of a series of legal challenges in recent years over how closely the government should be aligned with the Boy Scouts of America, a venerable organization that boasts a membership of more than 3.2 million members.

Civil liberties advocates have set their sights on the organization's policies because the group bans openly gay scout leaders and compels members to swear an oath of duty to God. "If our Constitution's promise of religious liberty is to be a reality, the government should not be administering religious oaths or discriminating based on religious beliefs," said ACLU attorney Adam Schwartz.

JR Unhappy

Dallas Elects Hispanic Lesbian Sheriff

Lupe Valdez scored three important firsts upon winning her race for Dallas County sheriff. She is the first woman to hold the position, the first Hispanic. She is also the first out lesbian to hold the job.

"Look at this room," the AP quoted Valdez. "All ethnic groups, all walks of life, rich or poor, gay or straight, whatever, we are an international town and this is what I bring to this." Valdez beat Republican Danny Chandler with 51 percent of the vote.

JR is reportedly very upset, according to roving Alternative Central reporter Sophonda Cox. "He didn't look happy all throughout the campaign. He kept checking out her outfits," Cox says.

3 Openly Gay Members Of Congress Re-elected

Three openly gay members of Congress were returned to Congress in the last election. Massachusetts' Democrat Barney Frank had little difficulty defeating his GOP opponent, Chuck Morse. Morse's platform called for curbs on job protections for gay workers.

Democrat Tammy Baldwin, the only out lesbian in the House, beat Republican Dave Magnum. During debate on the proposed federal marriage amendment Baldwin delivered an impassioned speech supporting gay families.

The only known gay Republican in the House, Kolbe also won re-election. Kolbe.

Meanwhile, Marilyn Musgrave, the author of the federal marriage amendment to ban same-sex marriage squeezed out a narrow victory after a bitter battle with Democrat Stan Matsunaka.

Connecticut Republican Chris Shays, one of the House's most gay positive Republicans, retained his seat against challenger Diane Farrell.

Region's Renaissance Transgender Association Active

We meet every first Saturday of each month in the Harrisburg Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) at 2973 Jefferson St. Harrisburg, PA from 8:30-11:00.

The mission of The Renaissance Transgender Association, Inc. is to provide the very best comprehensive education and caring support to Transgendered individuals and those close to them. This is accomplished through offering a variety of carefully selected programs and resources focused on the factors affecting their lives

A $5 donation is requested from non- members. Parking is plentiful and close to the building in a secure, low traffic area. Smoking is permitted outside. Light refreshments are provided, but no alcoholic beverages are permitted.

The doors open at 8:00pm for anyone needing facilities to dress.

Our Purpose is:

- Safe Space for All Transgender People
- Gender Education for Transgender People
- Gender Education for Helping Professionals
- Gender Education for the General Public
- Develop Local Support Organizations

Managing Director: Eta Moore@yahoo.com

Community:

We are all longing to go home to some place we have never been before- a place, half remembered and half envisioned we can only catch glimpses of from time to time. Community.

Somewhere, there are people to whom we can speak with passion without having the words catch in our throats. Somewhere a circle of hands will open to receive us, eyes will light up as we enter, voices will celebrate with us whenever we come into our own power. Community means strength that joins our strength to do the work that needs to be done. Arms to hold us when we falter. A circle of healing. A circle of friends. Someplace where we can be free.

Emily continued

individuals who believe that they have no place to turn in dealing with issues of sexual identity.

On a broader level, Novakowski has advocated legislative issues and lobbied members of the General Assembly for the passage of legislation protecting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals from hate crimes and discrimination. As both a SPARC and PFLAG advocate, she has taken up the message of full civil rights for all Pennsylvanians with energy and elegance.

SPARC executive director Scott E. Conlan lauds Novakowski on her decade-long, shining record of accomplishment on behalf of the gay community. "One cannot help being inspired and energized in the presence of this great force. To the exclusion of her own personal needs, she has uplifted the entire region with her single-minded determination and persuasive skills of communication. She is unique among advocates; an individual to whom one is drawn with genuine respect and full attention."

SPARC Board of Directors member Margie Bryant and Novakowski's personal friend, adds, "Novakowski was one of the first contacts I made as I was coming out. She was able to guide me and many others through that tough and confusing time. I was able to get involved in the lgbt community, building on the work and out reach she had begun. More and more people in our community are visible and comfortable being "out", and Novakowski is the woman who opened that closet door."

SPARC is the largest network of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender individuals and organizations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. SPARC fights for full civil rights by educating the public, elected officials, and the media about lgbt issues.

Personal Planning

Staying Hopeful After Election

"Stay hopeful after the election," advises Scott E. Conlan, executive director, SPARC, the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights Coalition (www.sparc-pa.org) on the heels of a report that lgbt people and their allies were feeling blue post election.

The community can take concrete steps to resist feelings of isolation, stress, and sadness in the face of anti-gay campaigns, according to a new publication by the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies. Communities in eleven states enacted divisive anti-gay referenda in this month's election. In the course of these campaigns to limit the rights of gay people, well-publicized stereotypes and hostility became dominant themes that challenged the psychological well-being of lgbt people.

"I've heard many stories about fear, sadness, and a sense of loss from people all over the country," noted Dr. Glenda Russell, author of the report. "Putting the civil rights of one group to a vote takes an enormous psychological toll on members of that group, as well as on communities and on families."

After Michigan voters amended the state constitution to ban same-sex marriages, Greg Varnum saw this impact first-hand at Eastern Michigan University. He described the aftermath of the vote: "In my role as student coordinator of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Resource Center, I have seen people dealing with surprise, anger, and sadness, with a sense of powerlessness and a desire to want to know what to do next."

The report, entitled "Surviving and Thriving in the Midst of Anti-Gay Politics," presents three primary strategies: analysis, action, and allies. Gay people should analyze the homophobia present in the campaign, take action to resist anti-gay efforts, and draw on the support of heterosexual allies. Russell noted that heterosexual allies play a particularly important role in reducing feelings of isolation in addition to the value of their political support.

"The research on how people get through the tough political times shows that these strategies work," according to author Glenda Russell, a psychologist and IGLSS senior research associate. "Although you can't shut out the negative messages about gay people that blanket a community during a campaign, we can respond to them in constructive ways."

The new report outlines strategies for individuals and for organizations. Community organizations of all kinds can provide important outlets for individuals to work through their feelings productively.

"Since the federal marriage debate is likely to pick up again," predicted Lee Badgett, IGLSS research director, "this new report should be essential reading for activists everywhere."

Dr. Russell also leads workshops on strategies for surviving anti-gay politics. Last weekend she led participants at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Creating Change conference in a discussion of these strategies.

The report can be dowloaded from http://www.iglss.org/media/files/Angles-72.pdf.

Myths continued

of marriage, and more to lose if states pass amendments banning marriage and other forms of partner recognition.

The study, titled "Black Same-Sex Households in the United States: A Report from the 2000 Census," is the first to analyze the demographics and experiences of black same-sex households captured by the 2000 census, the largest random sample dataset available on same-sex couples.

"As this landmark report makes clear, gay African-Americans are an active, involved, vibrant, and integral part of our communities. African-Americans make up 13% of the U.S. population. Black same-sex couples are 14% of all same-sex couples in the U.S. We are you," says H. Alexander Robinson, Strategic Director of the National Black Justice Coalition.

The study reveals:

-Three in five black female same-sex households (61%) are comprised of mothers raising children. Black lesbian couples are raising children at nearly the same rate as black married opposite-sex couples (69%).

-Black same-sex couples earn about $20,000 less per year than white same-sex couples and are less likely to own the home they live in.

-Black same-sex couples are more likely than white gay couples to hold public sector jobs, which may provide domestic partner health insurance.

-Black same-sex couples are almost as likely as black married opposite-sex couples to report living in the same residence as five years earlier, a key indicator of relationship stability.

"These facts underscore the hypocrisy and wrong-headedness of the Bush Administration's aggressive attempts to deprive same-sex couples equal marriage rights while touting its multi-million dollar 'African-American Healthy Marriage Initiative' as a way to strengthen the African American family," Foreman says. "This report clearly shows that denying the protections that come with marriage disproportionately hurts the ability of gay and lesbian African American couples to save money, provide for their children, buy a house, or prepare for retirement."

"Anti-gay leaders and organizations have long sought to divide the black and gay communities, speaking as if there are no black lesbian and gay people experiencing discrimination under key family policies. In fact, this study clearly identifies a large population of black same-sex couples in the US, more than half of whom are raising children. These families should be offered the same protections and opportunities to benefit from state and federal programs designed to promote family formation, stability, home ownership, and other values that contribute to community strength and the common good," Mr. Robinson says.

The study is available at: http://www.thetaskforce.org/library.

Republicans continued

from two polling places in Harrisburg and to challenge election officials at a third.

All three polling places serve largely black precincts, a constituency who overwhelmingly votes Democratic. The polls at 2552 Jefferson St. and the corner of 3rd and Kelker, 11th Ward had poll watchers challenged. They were out of the polling place for at least half an hour before Democratic lawyers who were on-site were able to have them returned.

The specifics of the Republican challenge involved the poll watcher's certificates, which must be signed by the Board of Elections and have the name of the candidate for whom the poll watcher is watching. The Republicans argued that the candidate listed must have personally signed the certificate.Pennsylvaniaelection law says no such thing.

At the third polling place, Lakeside Lutheran Church at 245 Division St, Republicans challenged an elections judge. Their attempts there were completely unsuccessful.

Also, at B'nai B'rith, there were rather unusual procedures in place. Those arriving to vote had to first sign in and present photo identification.Then, they had to wait in line to use the only voting machine. Pennsylvania election law mandates showing ID for first-time voters only.

Poll workers at B'nai B'rith gave conflicting statements regarding the necessity of signing up, waiting, and then voting, as opposed to waiting, signing up, and then voting, with one who wished to remain nameless stating that the machines would still work if people voted out of order.

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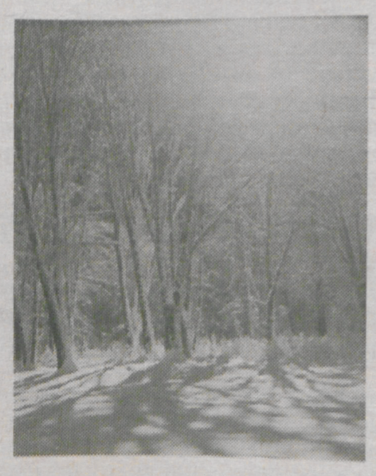

Personal Planning

Wealth Management Requires Planning

By Craig Hahnlen

Properly planning for your future means more than simply putting some money into your 401k or IRA every month. Proper planning involves understanding where you are in life, where you want to go, and how to minimize your risk along the way.

Wealth Management is here to help you prepare that roadmap, charting your course to independence. At Wealth Management our business is to partner with you on your financial journey.

No financial plan is complete without making sure you are properly insured. Through our independent insurance agency, IBA Insurance, we offer life, health, home & auto insurance through a number of highly rated companies including, The Hartford, Penn National Insurance, Encompass Insurance, Progressive, and many more.

We even offer a domestic partner program which allows couples in a committed relationship to receive the same auto insurance coverage and benefits as married couples. Not only can this mean considerable savings, but it can close any gaps in coverage and take away any worries when sharing vehicles. Combine this with discounts for homeowners insurance or renter's insurance and you are often looking at considerable savings for broader coverage.

When your current agent reviewed your coverages, did they explain full and limited tort options and which would be best for you? Did they help you understand uninsured and underinsured motorist coverage and whether you should have them "stacked" or "unstacked"? Improper coverage could put your entire financial future at stake, and we're here to help you avoid that.

Wealth Management wants to be your source for financial solutions. Whether your goal is to save for a new home or to become financially independent we will partner with you in reaching your goals. From 401k's to Roth IRA's our focus is on what makes the most sense for your individual goals and dreams. We pride ourselves on the personal service, and quality relationships that we offer and would love to get to know you as well.

Call Mark or Craig at Wealth Management at 717.533.3020 for a no cost consultation.

Gay Pioneers Visit Region

By Mark Ocker

"When faced with opposition, homophobia and hatred, remember three things: You are right, they are wrong, gay is good," advises Frank Kameny, one of three gay civil rights pioneers who recently addressed 120 people in the Pennsylvania State Museum.

The crowd screened documentary film "Gay Pioneers" about the gay civil rights movement from 1965 to 1969. Afterwards, three longtime activists featured in the film - Kameny, Barbara Gittings and Dr. Lilli Vincenz, the Rosa Parks of the gay-rights movement, spoke.

Common Roads, the region's lgbt youth, hosted of the event.

"Keep your rhetoric in order, don't compromise, take your position aggressively and firmly, be articulate and practice your sound bites," Kameny said.

Picketing for equal rights at the White House and in front of Independence Hall in Philadelphia was revolutionary back then. Most people had never seen an openly gay person. Picketing was an activists "coming out" in the 1960s homophobic environment.

Faced with her own challenges over homophobia, Gittings told the audience, "When challenged with difficulties, always follow that inner voice. Let the voice lead you, and only you will know. It will be compelling enough."

Media avoided gay rights in the 1960s, forcing filmmakers to rely on FBI surveillance photos and film obtained under the Freedom of Information Act to

continued on page 10

wealth management

Wealth Management

Craig Hahnlen
Account Executive

Mark Freer
Account Executive

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Personal Planning

Insured Company's Most Valuable Resource?

By Benn J. Smith
AXA Advisors, LLC

Many business owners today are familiar with key person life insurance. They know that if a key person is insured and dies, then the company generally receives income tax-free proceeds from the policy. Who is a key person? Someone whose death would have an adverse economic impact on a business. The owner(s) is typically the most important key person. But few people understand how key person life insurance can sometimes spell the difference between life and death for a small or medium-size firm, especially if the owner dies suddenly. This article is designed to help you see the value of key person coverage in appropriate situations and to provide some information about valuation techniques that can help you determine how much, if any, coverage your company may need. Why buy key person life insurance?

Key person insurance helps a company survive by minimizing the organizational loss and fiscal strain that following the death of key employees and helping to assure that:

• Business loans can be repaid. When a key person dies (especially an owner), a lender may have the right to call the loan. The insurance proceeds can help pay off that loan.

• Credit can be maintained. At the death of a key person, lenders may become reluctant to lend new money to the business or refinance outstanding loans. The insurance can help the firm maintain its credit rating by allowing it to pay its bills in a timely manner in spite of the death. It also demonstrates to the lender that the firm is well managed.

• A replacement can be recruited and trained. Months may pass before a qualified candidate can be found. Then it may take time to train him/her to the point where the replacement is as competent as the predecessor. There may also be a recruiter's fee to pay. So the insurance proceeds, in effect, buy time for the business.

• The business is indemnified for lost sales and profits. Some key people (e.g., the owner, the leading sales professional) may be extremely difficult to replace. Insurance proceeds can help offset the future loss in revenue that will probably occur, at least temporarily, at their death.

• Stock can be repurchased. If the business is a corporation, any common stock owned by the key employee can be repurchased with the insurance proceeds.

How Much Insurance?

There are a number of valuation techniques that have been developed to determine how much key person insurance is needed. Several of the more popular techniques are described below. Remember that no one method is best; a business owner may want to use a combination of these methods. Only the owner can really evaluate the potential loss and the effects of a key employee's death.

Method #I: Multiple of Salary Valuation. The key employee's value is estimated based on a multiple of current compensation. Frequently, a multiple of three to five times his/her salary is utilized. If the key person's salary is $75,000, the amount of insurance might be $225,000 ($75,000 x 3).

Method #2: Replacement Cost. First, figure out how much additional salary is being paid to the executive above the pay for the routine duties of the position. For example, if his/her salary is $80,000 but the routine part of the job amounts to $25,000, the additional skills are worth $55,000. Second, estimate how many years it would take to fully train a replacement to handle these extra duties. Assume two years. Third, multiply the above factor ($55,000 x 2 years equals $110,000 of life insurance).

Some of the other valuation techniques are more complicated and can't be adequately addressed in this article. Because it is simple and sensible, some business owners simply insure one year's profits.

If you buy a key person life insurance policy and the key person lives, you may have made a small mistake. If you don't buy a key person policy and a key person dies, you have probably made a big mistake. Your company can absorb small mistakes; big mistakes can absorb your company.

Benn Smith is a Registered representative of AXA Advisors, LLC, Member NASD, SIPC, 717-540-1404, Ext. 7003.

Region's continued

region's gay and lesbian community, according to Equity for Lesbians & Gays (EGAL).

The purpose of the meeting is to inform and solicit input regarding the development of a local lgbt community center from a broad representation of the community. It is vital to the development of a successful center that all interested groups have input into the process.

EGAL is a regional effort in conjunction with The Greater Harrisburg Foundation to raise awareness about the gay and lesbian community. The two groups recently announced plans to study the feasibility of developing an lgbt community center, says EGAL chairperson Ben Dunlap, Jr, Esquire.

EGAL recently contracted with Dering Consulting Group and Sue Rankin and Associates, State College, to produce a final report by July 2005 on the feasibility of such a center. Dering's Sandy St. George will work on the project.

The idea for a community center came together when EGAL, a project of The Greater Harrisburg Foundation, released in 2000 a needs assessment of the region's lgbt community. The single need identified across the board by women, minority, youth, groups and individuals was a community center.

In recent months, the EGAL committee, comprising representatives from the Gay & Lesbian Switchboard of Harrisburg, Alternative Central, Common Roads, Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit, the Women's Circle, Positive Opportunities, P-Flag and other groups, have been studying the issue.

"The Dering Consulting Group is pleased to be involved with the creation of a new lgbt community center that can serve as a home," says St. George. The group is a management consulting firm whose team includes Marsha Davis, owner of On Track Consulting Services. Davis is a Harrisburg-based lgbt supporter who has received business awards, including the Athena "Outstanding Business Woman of the Year" Award.

"Rankin & Associates conducts assessments through surveys, focus groups, and interviews," says Rankin. "We develop strategic plans and create intervention strategies for groups like EGAL." Rankin has long been involved with the state's lgbt community, having co-founded the Statewide Pennsylvania Rights

Coalition (SPARC). She also coordinated the first state-wide leadership retreat for gay youth.

"The goal of the meeting is to bring together all the key constituents from the lgbt community to make them aware of the project. We want people to know about the process we're following, and the need for their feedback," says Rankin. The collaborative effort, she notes, needs help in communicating this information to their respective communities. "We are looking forward to partnering with anyone who would like to be a part of this exciting step for the Harrisburg area," St. Geroge adds.

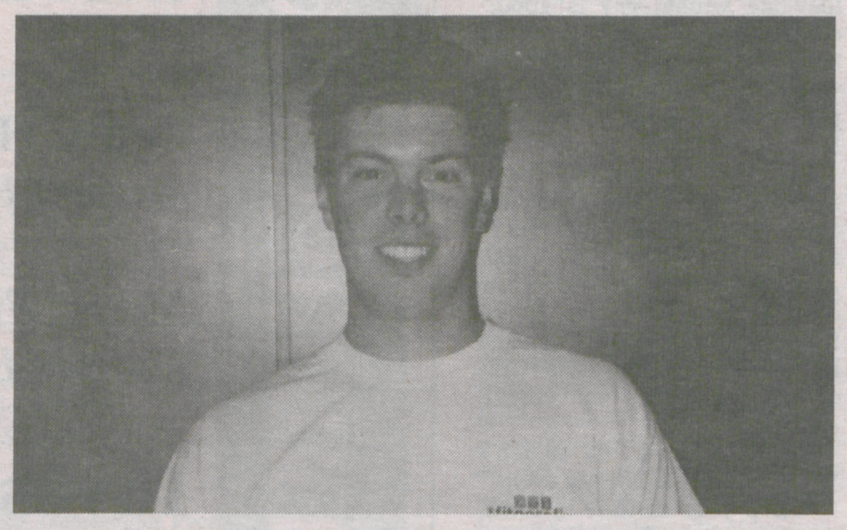
Any organization and/or individual – gay, straight, bisexual, transgender, whatever – is invited to participate in this public meeting. "No preparation is needed. Participants can expect a 30-minute presentation on the "focus group" process, a question and answer session, and a "next steps" review, Rankin says.

Contact: Sandy St. George, Dering Consulting Group, 717-234-0567, www.deringconsulting.com <http://www.deringconsulting.com/> ; Sue Rankin, sue@rankin-consulting.com.

Men's Health

by Brian Wolfe, The Fitness Firm

Train & Maintain Your New Year's Fitness Resolution



What is your New Year's Resolution? Most likely you are pledging to start an exercise program. You are not alone. There will be approximately 100 million Americans motivated to get in shape this year. Unfortunately, the vast majority of individuals do not adhere to their resolutions for one reason or another. These same individuals will make the same New Years Resolution year after year. What can you do to stop the cycle?

Have you ever consider working with a personal trainer? About 5 million Americans are hiring trainers to help them improve their physical conditioning and health. The role of a personal trainer is different for everyone. Most people are under the impression that all a personal trainer is good for is to teach you how to properly use exercise equipment. A personal trainer is so much more. A trainer can help you live a longer, healthier life, motivate you, and get results. A few appointments are all it takes for a good trainer to create an individualized exercise program that works for your body.

An exercise program needs to have variety and be fun! It should be modified to the individual; that's where a personal trainer enters the picture. A trainer will assess your current fitness level and your goals to create a customized program. Having one-on-one training sessions makes exercise safe. A trainer will instruct you on proper exercise form and good body mechanics. Trainers know the anatomy of the body and are familiar with the proper body position for the exercise equipment. Even seemingly minor changes in the way one exercises can make a huge difference in the results.

If you can answer "yes" to one of the following questions, you can benefit from hiring a personal trainer.

1. Are you using the "Cookie Cutter" approach?

Does your exercise program come from a magazine? Did a friend recommend an exercise program that worked for him or her? Chances are this exercise program will not work for you. There is no such thing as a "COOKIE CUTTER" approach when it comes to exercise. Everyone is different and if you want RESULTS, then you need an exercise program specific to you.

2. Not getting results?

Are you frustrated that the amount of effort you're putting forth is not matching the results you expected? A personal trainer will assess your current program and show you how to get results effectively and in less time. Your trainer will provide you with a safe and effective exercise regime that will allow you to achieve the highest level of fitness and health.

3. Having difficulty sticking to your program?

Large portions of gym members lose their motivation within six weeks. Your personal trainer will help you adhere to your program consistently and provide you with the supervision and individualized instruction necessary for you to achieve your fitness and health goals.

With the New Year here, why not resolve to make fitness a priority? Hire a personal trainer. You'll be glad you did.

Brian Wolfe, M.S., is Fitness Director at The Fitness Firm. His fitness research has appeared in The American College of Sports Medicine Journal.

Web Site Helps Smokers Quit

Researchers at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) launched iQuit - a free Internet-based smoking treatment study for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender smokers. (http://iquit.medschool.ucsf.edu).

The web site and study comes amidst research showing high rates of smoking in the lgbt community. In some parts of the community, lgbt smoking rates are 50% higher than heterosexual counterparts. This fact, along with the fact that smoking kills more people each year than HIV/AIDS, car accidents, and drug and alcohol use combined, makes smoking treatment programs an emerging public health priority for gay people.

The study will compare two Internet-based smoking treatments: One that provides general information that has been helpful in a variety of smoking treatment programs, another that includes the general information plus information and support designed especially for an LGBT audience. Smokers will be randomly selected to participate in one or the other. Researchers hope to enroll 600 participants over the course of a year. The purpose of the study is to determine if either treatment results in higher rates of use, more quit attempts, or higher quit rates.

Information: http://iquit.medschool.ucsf.edu.

Stonewall continued

deciding their vote. It sounds impressive, Turner notes, until you realize that pollsters only offered seven choices, counted terrorism and Iraq separately, even though the Bush campaign claimed they were linked, and that pollsters didn't ask voters, "What do you mean by 'moral values'?"

Weblog Eschaton (atrios.blogspot.com) noted afterward: "It took a British publication, The Economist, to point out that the percentage of American voters citing moral and ethical values as their prime concern is actually down from 2000 (35%) and 1996 (40%). ... In 1996, when 40% of Americans based their votes on 'moral values,' they re-elected Bill Clinton. Now that the number of Americans who base their votes on "moral values" has been cut almost in half, they selected George Bush."

"Does that sound like a mandate to impose the far right's agenda," Turner asks?

Accomplishments So Far The

Pennsylvania Legislature adjourned last year without passage of a single anti-gay measure.

Democratic legislators filed dozens of amendments to block anti-gay amendments. Hundreds of citizens called elected officials opposing anti-gay measures.

The U.S. Supreme Court passed up two opportunities to hear Massachusetts' legalization allowing same-sex marriage. Six states provide various legal benefits for same-sex partners.

Get Involved

Supporters can join CRSD's e-mail list at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/capitalregionstonewalldemocrats/ or contact:crstonewalldems@yahoo.com; 717-232-8382 or 777-0186 (noon - 9 p.m.); Capital Region Stonewall Democrats, P.O. Box 200, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Annual individual dues are $30, couple or family $50, $10 student/low-income.

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Personal Planning

Home Remodeling Takes Planning

By Greg King

My partner and I can barely control ourselves when it comes to feathering our nest. Unfortunately for my partner, I enjoy the satisfaction that comes from a well done do-it-yourself project. Working together we have learned a great deal about construction and our relationship.

There are many great how-to resources available and we used all that we could find. A person who is reasonably handy can generally complete any home improvement task if they do their homework first and take their time.

An often overlooked resource for how-to information is the store where you purchase your material. The best advice is obtained from specialty stores where they know a lot about one thing instead of a little about a lot of things.

Advice that is not dispensed frequently enough is to have a clear plan for your project. Because we didn't have a plan our six month project took several years. We were well into our project when we decided to add a den to our Master Suite. After the wall board was hung, we had to knock holes in the ceiling to add 26 recessed light fixtures that took five times longer to install and cost twice as much. Because we had not decided on a style for the room, the selection of wood trim took months. Selecting paintcolors practically resulted in divorce.

Some specialty items take a very long time to be delivered. In our case, when it was time to install the toilet, we decided it had to be black in order to coordinate nicely with the tile. Unfortunately, this caused a four week delay in completing the bathroom as we waited for a made-to-order black toilet. Because we needed a special size, vanity another delay was endured while we waited for a custom built cabinet.

Planning everything before starting will save time, money and frustration.

If possible select everything. It's hard to choose a paint color if you're not sure what fabrics you will use in the room. It's difficult to select light fixtures if you're unsure of the style you will decorate the room. If your project is going to take a long time to complete, you may want to consider purchasing and storing items like light and plumbing fixtures or wallpaper. Manufactures discontinue items everyday. It's a shame if you coordinated all your finishes with the perfect wallpaper only to discover a year later that it is no longer available.

We found that one of the hardest parts was to reconcile our completelyopposite visions for the space. When planning it is best to start by selecting a style for the room before delving into the details. Each of you can page through books and magazines. Don't look for something to copy, just look for pictures where you like the style or certain elements. Once you're both done, look over all the pictures you've both marked. As you sort through them together you will probably come to agree on one vision for your project. Once you've agreed on a vision it will be easier, maybe even fun, to select the individual elements.

When you do start to make your final selections, don't fail to go to the specialty stores. The large home improvement stores do have their appeal. You can select everything from wood trim, flooring, fixtures, paint and appliances right in one store. But, I've found that the specialty stores frequently have better selections, higher quality, much more knowledgeable staff and better prices.

Leave room in your budget to purchase tools. It is easy to think that a $300 power miter saw is unnecessary. But, it will save countless hours and have a dramatic effect on the quality of your work. This goes for many other tools. Most specialty tools can also be rented. The right tools will make your work easier and nicer.

Without a doubt careful planning and research is the first step of any size home improvement project.

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Gay Student Groups Should Enjoy Access

Gay and lesbian student groups should have as much access to the public schools as the Boy Scouts - that's what Lambda Legal is trying to argue as the U.S. Department of Education spells out access rules to our nation's schools.

The Bush administration has proposed regulations that would guide schools on how their facilities should be used by groups for meetings, activities and centers for recruitment. The new regulations specifically single out the Boy Scouts, which Education Secretary Rod Paige called a "patriotic youth group" that should be allowed to use the schools as much as "other groups" do.

Some school districts, like New York City, the nation's largest, severed ties with the Boy Scouts in 2000 because the organization discriminates against people who are gay. That meant the Boy Scouts could no longer meet on school grounds or recruit new members there. Chicago, San Jose, Minneapolis and San Francisco are just a handful of the other districts that followed suit and ended their sponsorship of Boy Scouts troops and also denied them access to campuses.

Lambda Legal said it would like the Department of Education to explain what it means by "other groups," and to specifically include gay-straight alliances as a group that should be allowed access to school facilities.

"The Bush administration wants to add thousands of words about the Boy Scouts to federal rules that don't say one word about gay student groups, even though they're both protected by federal law and gay-straight alliances are unlawfully denied school access on a regular basis," Kevin Cathcart, Lambda Legal's executive director, said in a press release. "By focusing on the Boy Scouts while ignoring gay youth, the Department of Education is failing our nation's schools and putting young people in harm's way. We aren't going to sit by and let that happen without a fight."

Lubbock, Texas, and Charlotte, N.C., are just two of several school districts across the country that have denied gay groups access to the schools.

Lambda Legal is asking people who agree with them to call or e-mail the Department of Education to get them to include gay-straight alliances to the language of the new regulations. There is a 45-day public comment period before the guidelines go into effect. People can write to the department at boyscoutscomments@ed.gov.

The campaign is a part of Lambda Legal's "Out, Safe and Respected" campaign, which hopes to teach gay youth about their rights in a school setting.

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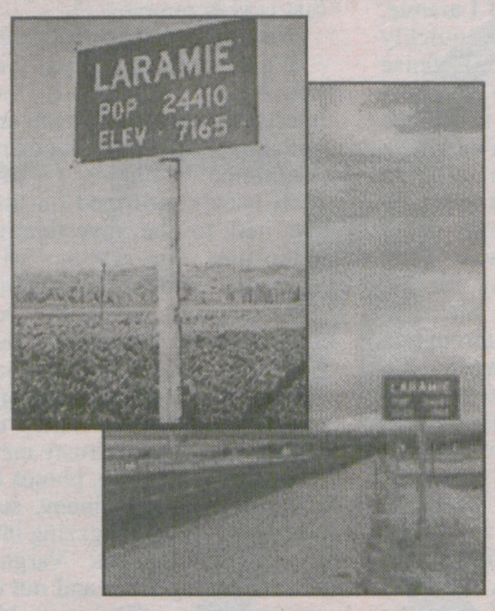

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Personal Planning

Same-Sex Law Report Launched

Law Journal Newsletters, a division of American Lawyer Media, Inc. (ALM), the nation's leading legaljournalism and information company, announced the launch of the "Same Sex Partnership Law Report," a new publication designed to update attorneys on this rapidly changing legal topic.

"The legal landscape in this area is changing constantly, and attorneys need to track activity in the legislatures, as well as in the local, state and federal courts, "says Marjorie Weiner, Law Journal Newsletters publisher. "This new report, coupled with web-based tools we provide, helps lawyers separate fact from advocacy and assist them in advising and representing clients who are seeking to understand and protect their rights in a very confusing legal environment," Weiner notes.

In addition to the print monthly report, subscribers receive free access to online state-by-state data, updated daily, that tracks breaking legal, political and business developments related to same-sex partnerships. Subscription information: www.ljnonline.com.

The newsletter provides attorneys working in areas related to benefits, employment, matrimony, inheritance and custody with an overview of both legal and legislative activity across the many aspects of same sex partnership that could potentially impact clients. These activities range from legal challenges to same-sex marriage bans, to key decisions on adoption rights, to changes in benefit policies.

Each month, newsletter content is guided by input from editorial board members, including noted practitioners and leading law school academics, helping subscribers focus on those developments that are most likely to produce substantive changes in law or legislation.

Subscribers can also click on an associated interactive map to monitor daily news and activity related to same-sex partnerships in their state and find links to supporting information, including the text of major related court decisions.

"The Same Sex Partnership Law Report" is available now at a special introductory rate of $349 per year. Orders can also be placed by calling 1-(800) 999-1916.

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"20/20" Offers No Hindsight on Matthew Shepard's Murder

by Christopher Tittel
Key West Correspondent

"Just deal with what is true. You know what is true. You need to do yourbest to say it correct."

Father Roger Schmit gently counseled dramaturges Greg Pierotti and Leigh Fondakowski with these words more than six years ago. The Catholic priest had just organized a vigil for Matthew Shepard, the gay college student whose vicious beating and murder on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyo., quickly drew worldwide media outlets as well as the New York-based Tectonic Theater Project to Laramie's doorstep. Father Schmit expressed concern that the play that Pierotti, Fondakowski and other TTP members were developing out of the Shepard story not stir up any additional hate or violence.

The priest's remarks were later incorporated into "The Laramie

Project," one of the most widely performed theater pieces of our day. The play is a montage of comments from Laramie folk - hailing from all points along the social and political spectrum - questioned not only about the possibility that Shepard's murder was a hate crime but also about the myriad of sexual, religious, human rights and other issues that labeling it as such raises.

Russell Henderson and Aaron McKinney, the two local men who pistol-whipped

Shepard, tied him to a fence and left him to die alone on the prairie just outside of Laramie, were arrested and quickly brought to trial. Defense attorneys reportedly discouraged both men from taking the stand and speaking in their own defense. Henderson pleaded guilty, in hopes that the plea would save him from death row. McKinney, who took primary responsibility for the savage attack on Shepard, escaped death row through a plea bargain between his attorneys, prosecutors and Shepard's parents. Henderson and McKinney are each serving two consecutive life sentences for the murder of Matthew Shepard.

One of the terms that McKinney and his lawyers reportedly committed to in the plea agreement was that neither McKinney nor his defense team would ever talk about the events of that fateful night. Presumably, the Shepards wanted to ensure that McKinney would never have the opportunity to capitalize (in the form of lucrative publishing contracts, movie deals, television specials and the like) on the brutality that was unleashed on their son.

So, what was Elizabeth Vargas doing interviewing both Henderson and McKinney on ABC's "20/20" in late November? Vargas promised us that we would hear "stunning new information" from "new sources that have come forward for the very first time."

"It is a story that gripped the nation, but started in a place that is very remote ... "

Wow. Honey, get the popcorn.

What followed was an hour-long patchwork of interviews with Henderson and McKinney on their methamphetamine binges, with McKinney's girlfriend on how she lied to the investigating authorities in 1998, with Shepard's friend on his suicidal overtones and with Tom Doc O'Connor on revelations that McKinney might be bisexual. All of the less-than-stunning new information was tarted up with grunge music, crusty meth bowls being fired up, photos of a bleary-eyed McKinney, soft portraits of Shepard gazing into a vast nothingness, Vargas' teasers' taking us in and out of commercials "Did you kill Matthew Shepard because he was gay?" ... pause ... fade out ... cut to an air freshener ad and, worst of all, the rather nonsensical title, "The Matthew Shepard Story: Secrets of a Murder," bulleted across the screen.

ABC really outdid itself in the tabloid sensationalism department. Really.

Editor and Publisher magazine printed an article previewing the "20/20" episode earlier this month that indicated that gay activists feared the program would "de-gay" Shepard's murder. While some viewers were satisfied with McKinney's on-air assertions that he merely intended to rob Shepard and that he was out of his mind on methamphetamine that night, it was disappointing that Vargas didn't ask McKinney why it seemed to be the act of Shepard sliding his hand onto McKinney's thigh that drew the first strike with the pistol.

"Sometimes, when you have that kind of rage going through you," McKinneytold Vargas, "there's no stopping it."

Rage, Aaron? What rage? Over Matthew touching your leg?

Interestingly enough, McKinney said nothing on air about that fateful night that isn't already in the play. The TTP sifted excerpts of the transcript of investigating officer Rob Debree's initial interrogation of McKinney in 1998 into "The Laramie Project." The interrogation includes McKinney not only pinpointing Shepard sliding his hand up his leg as the act that set him off, but also confessing that he gets "pretty aggravated" when gays "start coming onto me."

Despite its many shortcomings, the program offered interesting insight into how any attempt to "deal with what is true" and "say it correct" can bring so many wildly different interpretations of one event.

Sadly, just about the only thing that we can say is true and correct - even after watching the "20/20" report - is that Matthew Shepard is dead and his killers are behind bars for life.

Chad Graham, who wrote a piece on the "20/20" episode for The Advocate this week, suggests not only that Vargas return to journalism school but also that ABC apologize to the Shepard family.

I'm inclined to agree wholeheartedly on both accounts.

Editor's Note: It is well known (except perhaps to 20/20's Elizabeth Vargas) that Harper's magazine in 1999 published an in-depth cover story on Shepard's murder that considered how methamphetamine abuse may have intersected with his killer's homophobia, thus contributing to Shepard's murder.

Profile

Don't Cry for Me: Barbara Rocco, Woody's Karaoke Star

by Jesse Smith
Philadelphia Correspondent

It's close to midnight on a Monday at Woody's when an emcee in drag calls Barbara to the stage. She's one of the few women here, easily the oldest. The crowd of Diesel jeans, sleeveless tees, and refined haircuts parts, making way for a plump woman in her 60s, wearing pink pants, sneakers and a white jacket with gold griffins, the kind you see walking down the Atlantic City boardwalk on a breezy August night. She always wears a wig to cultivate an image, she says, just like Cher or Madonna. Tonight it's a dirty blonde job, very Carol Channing, that's enhanced with bright extensions, blonde to the point of yellowness and attached with a golden plastic clip. When she hears the first notes, she shuts her eyes, throws her head back and raises her arms, letting the microphone hang an inch or two from her mouth.

"Baby look at me, and tell me what you see. You ain't seen the best of me yet. Give me time, I'll make you forget the rest."

If you ask, Barbara will tell you about her marquee performances at Longwood Gardens and the 1964 Democratic National Convention in Atlantic City, her cameos in Dead Poets Society and on 1980s game show Win, Lose or Draw with Mr. T. She's since scaled her at back to focus exclusively on karaoke and open-mic nights. She likes to sing in Atlantic City when she can catch a ride with friends, but frequently finds herself stranded in Philadelphia, performing at gay venues like Woody's, Pure, and Tavern on Camac, and sometimes at straight joints like Doc Watson's Pub.

Barbara's repertoire varies little from week to week; this time, she's singing "Fame," one of her more hopeful numbers. Others include "Don't Rain on My Parade," "Hopelessly Devoted to You" and "Don't Cry for Me Argentina." She's performed these songs so many times that she no longer needs the words. "Fame" is one of the few songs she sings in time to the music; for others she prefers to go at her own pace, letting the words take their time coming to her, deaf to the music that's left her behind.

Barbara Rocco has always wanted to entertain. She started when she was five years old in South Philadelphia, dancing in talent shows at churches and community centers. After graduating from Chestnut Hill College in 1963 with a degree in biology, she became a substitute teacher so she'd be able to earn a living while pursuing her true calling, show business.

"I never wanted to be stuck without money. I was bright enough to know that in show business there could be time when you didn't work and didn't make money," she says. "I can go anywhere and get a job."

Wherever she goes, Barbara carries a thick folder containing copies of her two-page resume. It lists many of her performances but, as she is always sure to note, there are more to add. On it, she describes herself as an entertainer ("multitalented, character actress, singer, dancer, comedienne") and singer ("mixed repertoire artist, show tunes, standard tunes, patriotic tunes, contemporary tunes, arias, light operatic tunes, requests, folk, country western, rock and disco"). Most of the events listed are county and state fairs, a few college concerts, and some hospitals. None have dates or her role. She also carries copies of letters of recognition for her performances, most notably from Frankie Miller, executive assistant to Governor and Mrs. P.S. DuPont of Delaware, who in 1984 praised a performance at the governor's fair by one Bobbie Christopher, a stage name Barbara said she used at the time. In her Bobbie Christopher days, she dressed more glamorously. "I wore sequined costumes. But I gave up carrying them around 'cause I said, 'You know what? They're going to have to accept me. I don't feel like a sequined costume now. I want to save that for some day when I'm higher up the ladder."

Barbara has always wanted to reach a wider audience than a few hundred people watching at a fairground. "I just want mass appeal," she says, and she is willing to put in whatever work it takes to win it. Her dedication, however, often puts her at odds with fellow karaoke and open-mic night performers. She recently lost a karaoke contest at Pure, a gay club just off 13th and Locust Streets that carried a $500 cast prize, and was none too pleased about the competition.

"I work for this, you know? It's not like, hey, I'm just doing this for fun and games and I'm doing this for nothing. I'm working for it. I don't know what these other people are doing, but I'm a working professional."

Barbara has theories. The first time we met, she wanted to talk about nothing else; the second time, she insisted we pick a second place to meet, just in case the first, the Wendy's at 11th and Walnut Streets, was sabotaged. "They" are trying to ruin her chances for stardom. "They" are a large and inclusive group composed of her siblings, boyfriend, Middle Eastern terrorists, federal agents, and Atlantic City casino bosses, among others. She has a litany of charges that include mail tampering, phone tapping, kidnapping, and theft of her property, especially of items related to her career, such as headshots and news clippings. She's convinced that her career in Atlantic City never reached its apex because a group of Middle Easterners told her that somebody was making sure word of her talent wasn't reaching the upper echelons of casino power. Even though she believed these men to be terrorists, she took them at their word. "Just because you're a terrorist doesn't mean you can't be my friend," she says. Barbara isn't happy with how much she makes in tips when she performs, and she has a theory bout that too.

"They told me the karaoke would be thrown. In other words, something to the effect that I wouldn't be making the tips that I'm supposed to be making. Now I'll tell you the truth: some nights I've made as much as thirty-five dollars in tips but there's some nights I make nothing. Why? I don't know. All I know is that whatchamacallit that works here on 12th Street, this Puerto Rican fella who works at the gay clubs in Rehoboth Beach, told me that I should be making, he said, at least one hundred dollars a night at Woody's.

"I've figured out the ways they could be doing this. The P.A. system is tampered with because it's loud all the time and drowning me out. You can't hear the quality. You see, if you sing, what makes a star is what they do with their voice on the microphone. How they change it around: soft, loud, feeling, breathing, everything, all the factors. If you can't hear that, you're the same as everyone else. You're just drowned out and loud."

She sounds theatrical when talking about these crimes against her, waving her hands and slapping the table, her voice rising as she diagrams the overlapping coils of the conspiracy against her. The charges are recorded and annotate on napkins in straight, clean block letters. She has sent portions of the dossier to the Department of Justice and members of the state Legislature, whose cordially baffled replies have been of little help. Next, Barbara plans to ask District Attorney Lynne Abraham to bring the responsible parties to justice.

Sometimes the grind of trying to advance her career while avoiding the traps set by those who would keep her from fame gets to her, and she allows herself a moment of exasperation with it all, a moment of imaging the leisurely life of a retiree.

"I want to sing, dance and act. That's what it's all about. I want my education. How about a game of tennis? Do I get to play, do I get to have fun? I don't even have fun.

"How about lying on the beach? Well, I did that in Atlantic City, but I ran back and forth to do the karaoke everyday on the boardwalk besides doing the things at night. Now I'll tell ya, I'm out there getting publicity. Everybody said to keep going. If you can't dance, sing. If you can't act, sing. But you've got to keep going. You'll never make it in show business by stopping. It doesn't matter if they take away this or take away that. You've got to keep performing."

She'd perform every night of the week if she could. Each night is a chance to hone to craft and build a following, and have a roof over her head for a few hours. She can spend the better part of her days at Wendy's or Millennium Café, where she'll buy a baked potato, coffee or Danish for the right to sit and set down her bags and suitcases. The story at night is different. She'll stay at a bar or club until closing, usually around 2:00 a.m. By that time, there are only a few hours to kill on the street until the next day begins.

December 2004
24th X-mas Eve Candle Light cocktails: 5:30-7:30pm

25th Open at 8pm

31st Champagne toast at Midnight

January 2005
1st Open at 4pm with Pork & Sauerkraut Buffet

7th Gay.com Party:
9pm-Midnight- "Fabulous Prizes"

9th Bartender Paul's (pale blue eyes) Birthday Bash- 9pm (Bash includes the Ladies of the Strawberry and other surprises.)

February 2005
4th Gay.com Party: 9pm-Midnight-"Fabulous Prizes"

15th Fat Tuesday Marti Gras Party- 7pm-??
(Prizes for Best Costume-Judging begins at 10pm)

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Opening Reception
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Four Artists
Invitation Exhibition-
Feb 19, 2005 thru
March 24, 2005

Art Association OF HARRISBURG

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Theme:
"Separated at birth:
Shared birthdays"
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$50 admission 7pm-midnight

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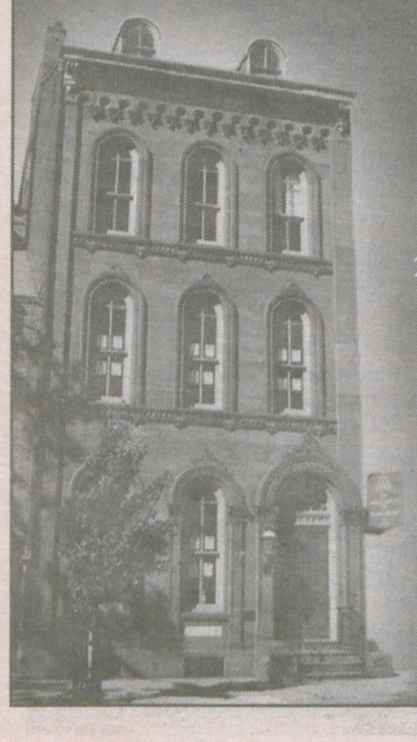

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ALLIED ARTS FUND

RESERVATIONS NOW AVAILABLE FOR BAL MASQUE!

Call now to make your reservations for the Art Association of Harrisburg Bal Masque, set for Friday evening, January 14, at the Hilton Harrisburg! Presented by Signature Sponsor PSECU, the Bal Masque will provide a festive outlet to brighten the dark winter nights after the end of the Christmas holidays.

"Separated at Birth: Shared Birthdays" is the theme of the 2005 Bal...attendees are encouraged to disguise themselves as the famous (or infamous!) person with whom they share a birthday! (Check out www.scopesys.com/anyday/ to see with whom you share your special day!) Costumes will be awarded to individuals, couples and groups in the categories of "Most Comical," "Most

Outrageous," and "Best Theme Interpretation," as well as overall Judges' Choice. (Celebrity judges are being recruited as of this writing). Emcee for the event is Letitia Miele, WHP-Tv's11PM Co-Anchor.

The cost for the evening is only $50 per person, with dancing to Impact Band and hors d'ouevres stations commencing at 7 PM. Costume judging will take place centre-stage at 8:30 PM, and the awards will be announced at 10:30 PM, along with a raffle drawing. Raffle prizes consist of: a half-day spa package for two and overnight accommodations at Hotel Hershey, with lunch at the Oasis; dinner for two at the Golden Sheaf and overnight accommodations at the Hilton Harrisburg; and an original watercolour by Erna Tunno. Raffle tickets are available now at $5 each, through 10 PM the night of the Bal.

Proceeds from the Bal benefit the Art Association's cultural programs, including children's art education. Call 717-236-1432 for reservations now! Or visit www.artassocofhbg.com.

Carrie WisslerThomas,
President

Morality Index

Red State Memphis City School Board recently voted to ban corporal punishment. In 2003-2004, staff administered 27,918 paddlings, sometimes for athletic underperformance.

80% of the federally-funded Abstinence Education materials teach that "studies show that 5% to 10% of women will never again be pregnant after having a legal abortion." Medical textbooks state that fertility is not affected by having an elective abortion.

59 percent of 1,000 respondents in an AP-Ipsos poll favor choosing a US Supreme court nominee who would uphold Roe v. Wade.

At 2.4 per 1,000 population, Massachusetts has nation's lowest divorce rate. The rate in Texas is 4.1, according to George Barna Research Group, a CA-based born-again Christian company.

Born-again Christians have the highest divorce rates, according to Barna Research Group. On NBC's *Meet the Press* November 28, 2004, Reverend Jerry Falwell falsely claimed that the divorce rate is lower among born-again Christians than all other Americans.

Using US Census Bureau data, The Associated Press found the highest divorce rates in the Bible Belt, "roughly 50 percent above the national average."

Marc Cherry, creator of the hit television series "Desperate Housewives," is "a somewhat conservative, gay Republican," according to *Newsweek* magazine. His show has higher ratings in Red than in Blue states.

"The only true Jews are Christians," says Rev. Fred Phelps on his web site Godhatesfags.com."

Not true: "The family that prays together, stays together." Divorce rates among conservative Christians were much higher than for other faith groups, and for Atheists and Agnostics, according to researcher Meg Flammang.

Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge holds stock in seven companies that hold contracts with the Homeland Security Department, according to that department.

Under CEO Dick Cheney, Halliburton generated $30 million in revenue from deals with Iraq under Saddam Hussein.

For every 20 poor Americans living in a city there are 21 poor people living in a suburb, according to Harper's Research. Of the 20 fastest growing US counties, 17 are in coastal states.

Research completed by Alternative Central.

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Don't Be a Skinhead in 2005

By Angela King

My name is Angela. I am 29-years-old, and I have a story to share with you.

For nearly 10 years, I was a skinhead. Not just a skinhead, a racist skinhead - full of hate, self loathing, prejudice and bigotry. About six years ago, I moved away from the racist movement, and it seems like this journey has taken a lifetime.

At a young age, I found myself removed from my peers and family. I was always on the outside looking in, wanting to belong but knowing how. I looked for a social group where I could belong.

By 15, I met a few skinheads. My parents had just divorced, and my family split apart. I grew so angry inside that I hated everyone and everything around me, including myself. I felt alienated and unwanted.

I turned to self destructive avenues. I was having sex, smoking, drinking alcohol, and experimenting with drugs. Although I had talked to a few psychiatrists, none of them seemed to say the words that I needed to hear.

At first, I didn't really comprehend what it was to be a skinhead. It seemed like the cool thing to do because I came across others who were just as angry as I was. It was perfect, giving me an excuse to be mean and hateful, taking my anger out on the whole world. The best part was that these skinheads wanted to be my friend.

I was so much in need of acceptance, I ate up the propaganda my new friends threw at me. I never realized my "thinking process" had quit functioning. I had found a new family and they wanted me. Being accepted was all that mattered. I became more and more popular and involved with racist organizations.

Years of my life had passed by. I would occasionally have doubts about what I was doing, but I would successfully push them away. I began breaking the law, elevating my status among the other racists.

Eventually, my doubts surfaced. I considered what I was doing to myself and to other people and decided that I no longer wanted to be a skinhead. I tried to leave this hateful atmosphere, but I was not strong enough. I continued breaking the law.

I eventually spun out of control, getting involved in a robbery that hurt someone. I ended up in prison for almost three years, my life's most degrading experience. During my time in prison, I learned a great deal about myself. I learned to love myself – which is where I went wrong in the first place. It took my going to prison to realize I am responsible for myself and my actions.

Today, I have nearly finished an Associate Degree in Social Work. I work at a college, and I'm a human rights advocate as well. I make it my business to speak up for what is right, and good, and for what I know to be true. The truth is I'm gay, a lesbian, and I'm proud. I urge you not to be ashamed of who you are. Take pride in being you. We're all part of One Human Family!

Pioneers continued

actually make the documentary. The person most responsible for the disclosure was none other than J. Edgar Hoover. Former US Senator Bob Dole one evening complimented journalist Helen Thomas on her gown. Dole told his audience her dress was selected from "The J. Edgar Hoover Collection." Hoover lived a tortured life, hunting down real and imagined homosexuals while living with Clyde Tolson, his lifelong partner. Are all homophobes gay?

While the pioneers picketed, they observed strict rules: Men were well groomed, wore suits and ties. Women wore very conservative dresses in order to look respectable and employable. They wanted to look like everyone else because employers could fire or refuse employment to those who were suspected of or appeared gay. During one march, a protester yelled "you actually look human."

In June 1969, the Stonewall Riots between the police and New York City gays erupted. By 1970, the pioneer's demonstrations united to mark the first anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, leading to Central Park's first gay pride parade and emulated worldwide.

Vincenz advises queers during these backlash times: "If you like to belong, be a joiner and get involved. The closet can be very stuffy! Become immunized against fear. We are right and in a world of societal brain washing, they are wrong."

City Confidential:
All Dirt, No Filler

By Sophonda Cox

Alternative Central has eyes and ears roaming from ***Provincetown*** to ***Key West***. No one is safe. Unlike Las Vegas, we do talk. ***City Confidential*** is an occasional column - all dirt, no filler.

National Museum of Homophobia? After one elected official yelled "faggot" four times on the Pennsylvania Senate floor and a Harrisburg City Council member called council president "homo," maybe it's time for the National Museum of Homophobia here in the Capitol City?

And while I'm on it, is Harrisburg City Council diverse enough? Although this would be wrong, just for the perverse glee, wouldn't you just love to organize an "N Word Brigade" to attend the next city council meeting? And then sit back and watch all the righteous indignation. What if someone called Otto Banks a "nigger?" I'll bet he'd scream "racism" so loud they'd hear him in South Africa.

Ready to change teams? Overhead, verbatim - "…so, um, like, you know, where do all those humungous boobs go after strip club chicks hafta get 'em off, cause they're, like, you know, way to much to carry around and all, and, um, dudes don't always like that, every night, I mean, you know, me, I figure, you know, go buy that major booty-boob stuff every once in a while, why work around it every night...dude, you know?

Central Sighting- Brownstone Lounge - Five years running, Brownstone Lounge owner Karen Kane, 412 Forster St., Harrisburg (717-234-7009), has provided a safe and friendly environment for dining, socializing, unwinding. Piano Bar virtuoso Little Ricky, (left) is known as "Magic Fingers" during his Fri. & Sun. 6-8 p.m. "Piano Bar" with Free Buffet. Grandma, (right) hosts "Trivia with Grandma", prizes, Th. 8 p.m. Happy Hour daily, 6-8 p.m. Open M-F 11 a.m.-2 a.m.; Sat-Sun.1 p.m.- 2 a.m. Call or stop in for lunch and events. Private banquets and personalized catering available.

Social Justice Event Planned

The Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies (CLAGS) will present workshops, panels, papers, poster presentations, films and performances for a conference on "Trans Politics, Social Change, and Justice" to be held May 6-7, 2005 in New York City.

This conference will provide a venue to strengthen activist and research networks, incite dialogues, share research, and create resources central to creating social change for trans people.

During two days, conference participants will take part in plenary sessions, breakout groups, and roundtables about trans activism and public policy research on local, state-wide, national, and international levels. Activists and researchers will have the opportunity to further develop their ongoing work and to create new dialogues with trans and non-trans allies.

The vent encourages the participation of trans people in the broadest possible sense of the word "trans." The conference's educational goal is go beyond simple lessons about tolerance and gender diversity and engage participants in an advanced discussion of the experiences and political interests of different trans constituencies, including, but not limited to trans, butch lesbians, drag queens, bi-gendered, two-spirited, drag kings, femme queens, A.G.s, genderqueer, non-gendered, andro, crossdressers, and gender-bender peoples.

We welcome presentations and workshops focused on intersex issues. While intersex issues are distinct from transgender issues, the conference focuses on multiple aspects and effects of binary gender frameworks, and alliance between intersex and transgender activists strengthens all of our work.

The conference's practical goal is to create new interactions and foster ongoing collaborations among grassroots activists, community organizers, researchers, attorneys, LGBT community members, and members of allied communities and organizations. We encourage workshops and roundtables that will promote collaborative work and active discussions.

Contact: clags@gc.cuny.edu (put "trans politics conference" in the subject line) or 212-817-1955.

YELLOWMAN
by Dael Orlandersmith
February 4 - 27
Two childhood friends fall in love, but the color of their skin and the prejudices of their community tear them apart. An unsparing look at the complexities of race and gender.
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- **January 10, Spiritual Autobiography Class, Mondays 7 pm,** learn to share your story with lessons learned along the way
- **January 15, Snow Tubing at Ski Roundtop, call church for details 236-7387**
- **February 5, First Aid and CPR Training, 9 am at the church, cost is $55.** Register by January 30 by calling 236-7387.
- **February 27, Jason and DeMarco, Worship at 10:30, Concert at 7 pm,** they were recently featured in the Advocate. Hear the testimony of two young people who celebrate their faith along with the fact that they are gay!

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Interested in applying? Please submit cover letter and resume to Ed Granger, Education Services Manager, ACA, 401 Division Street, Suite 100, Harrisburg, PA 17110. EOE

Transgender Individuals Often Misunderstood

By Anonymous

Being a pre-operative transgender woman (male to female) in living in central PA not only creates misconceptions in the straight world, but also in the gay community. However, I do understand my unique gift is confusing. After all, I spent several decades soul-searching and putting together the pieces of my complex puzzle.

Essentially, there's wide confusion about the relationship between gender and sexuality. If a man does something effeminate, the first question usually asked is, "Is he gay?" Many people mistakenly assume that feminine behaviors are part of homosexuality. They also assume that cross-dressing and being transgender are intrinsically gay. In reality, gender-based behaviors and sexual orientation are often unrelated, and few homosexuals, even those who occasionally cross dress, are truly transsexual. It is best to distinguish between the two and keep them separate. In fact, most cross-dressers are heterosexual.

The most pervasive myth in the gay community is the assertion that changing genders (male to female) is a means to having relations with men. In other words, common goal is to with a man as a woman. That not true. For most male to female individuals, becoming indistinguishable from genetic females and blending successfully into society in order to live as a woman usually brings peace and happiness. And finding someone to love them unconditionally during this long journey is icing on the cake.

In addition, true gender usually has to be determined via transitioning (self-discovery and acceptance, hormone replacement therapy and exploring safe gender options) before sexual identity can be uncovered and understood. Amazingly, during transition and re-entry into puberty, one's sexual identity can change. When one's heterosexual identity does not change, most seem perplexed when you indicate you are a gay woman. Confused? It's really simple: You identify as female, take extreme measures to become one and sexual preference does not change. The evolution makes when you separate gender from sex. In other words, when an male to female's sexual identity changes during transition and "she" now desires men, she is a heterosexual women.

Fascinating, isn't it?

Is There a Gay Gene?

Genetic factors plus cultural and early experiences influence male homosexuality, according to researchers. University of Padua researchers say the genetic components are linked to the X chromosome inherited only from the mother, but they are probably on other chromosomes and could partly explain male homosexuality.

"The key factor is that these genes both influence homosexuality in men, higher fecundity in females and are in the maternal and not the paternal line," says team researcher Andrea Camperio-Ciani.

More than a decade ago US scientists reported finding evidence of a "gay gene" in men. Other researchers questioned the finding when they could not duplicate the results.

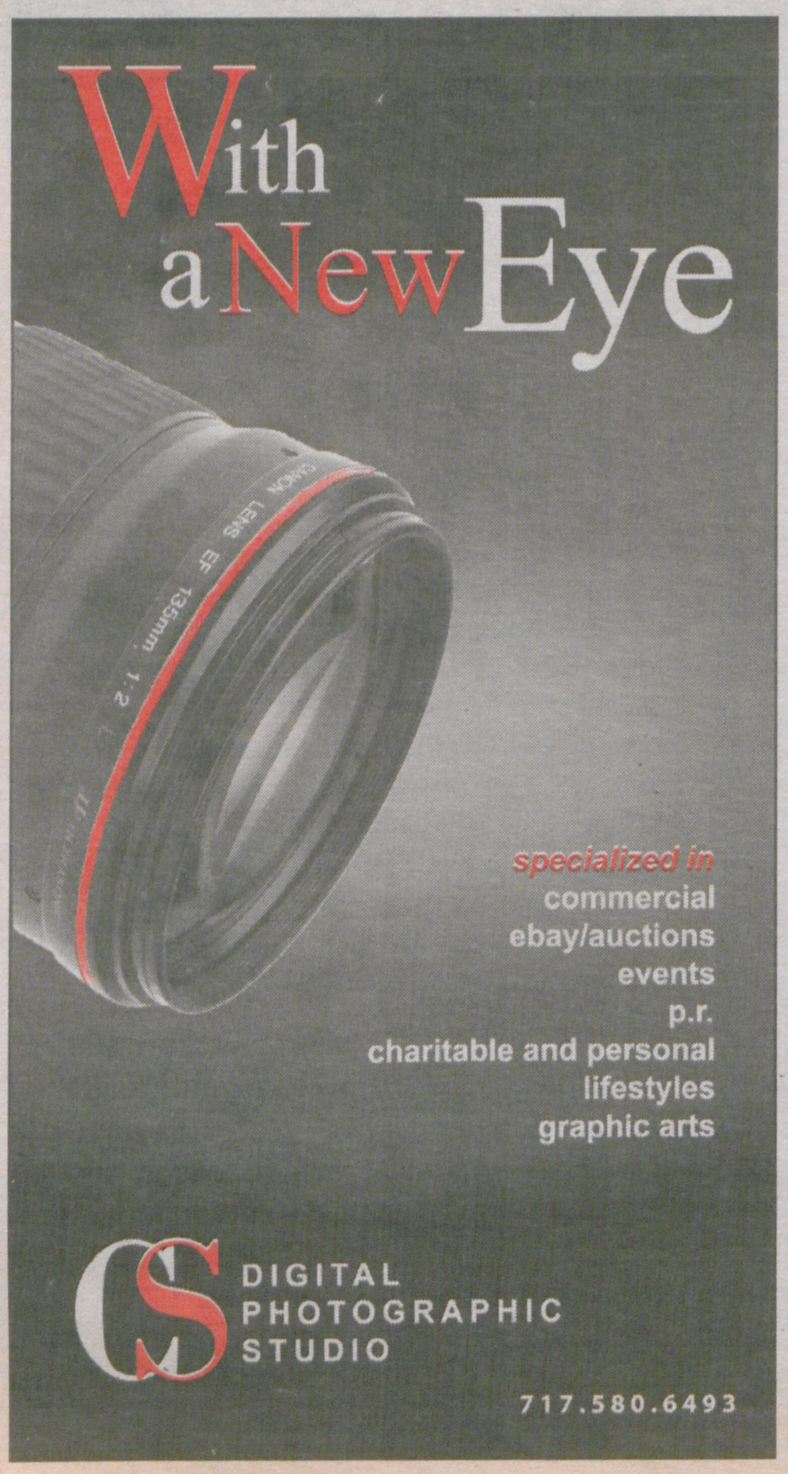
Camperio-Ciani and his team suggest there several genes could be involved, including those on the X chromosome. In his research, reported in the Proceedings of the Royal Society, his team found an increase in homosexuality in the maternal line of gay men they studied which suggests the X chromosome.

"We know that at least one of these genetic factors in on the X chromosome but that is not enough, there must be other genetic factors that are important but are elsewhere," Camperio-Ciani added.

The results are based on a study of 98 homosexual and 100 heterosexual men and about 4,600 of their relatives. The scientists compared the frequency of gay men on the maternal and paternal lines of the families. Among homosexuals there were a greater number of gay men in the maternal line of the family, as well as greater fertility in the female relatives.

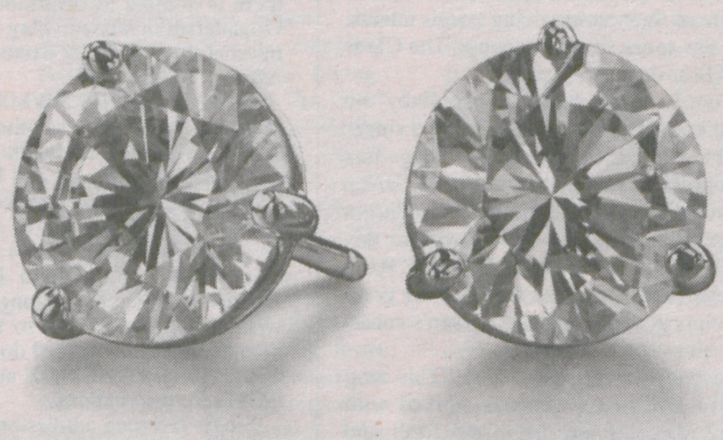
An early interest in sex before the age of 10 was also a predictor of homosexuality, according to the researchers.

"We can no longer say that is it impossible to have a gene that influences homosexuality because we found out that genes might have different effects depending on gender," Camperio-Ciani, adding that cultural and individual experience also play a part.



Central Sighting- Harrisburg - The Mantis Gallery owners Andrew Guth and Tara Chickey opened in 2003 and haven't looked back once. Known as the place to hold your event, they've hosted Harrisburg Young Professionals (HYP), independent film group "Moviate" and poetry events including Emily Rice. Mantis has also showcased noted national and international filmmakers and visual artists: Caleb Smith, Don Patron, Matt Eggsware, Kristen Livelsberger, Kevin Facer, Jason Pappariella and Dan Stauffer of the Lunchbox Collective. Others featured were Thorsten Fleisch, 2Big Rybgynski and Daniel Mayer. Th. 3-6 p.m.; F 3-7 p.m.; Sat. 12-7 p.m.; Sun.12-4 p.m.; 717-236-2131.

Cupid



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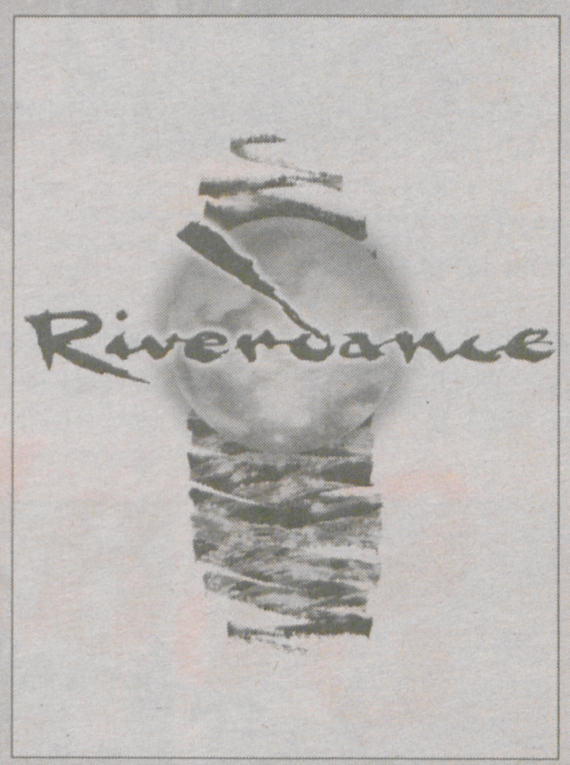

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Clubs

DJ Barry's World of Music

Stallion's DJ Barry offers insights on radio, concerts, club music, and music news.

Welcome to the New Year! Here's what happening in the music scene.

I want to cover a term in the music business and in dance clubs that I'm often asked about. What is a remixer or a remix? A remixer is a person that is, in most cases, paid by music companies to make an alternate or extended version of a song. You will hear the finished single or song on the radio and on an artist's CD. The remixer will take the song and tear it apart, add more vocal or additional music. The finished product ends up being an alternate version or an extended dance remix played at dance clubs.

In most cases, a remixer takes a three-and-a-half minute song and adds what they want to make it seven or eight minutes long. It usually has a longer beginning and ending. This will give Club DJ's some additional time to work with a song when playing for the dance floor.

Extended remixes are usually a little more upbeat in order to get a crowd on its feet. Most of the better known remixers are famous Club DJ's in big cities. If you're club music, then you might have seen the names Junior Vasquez, Peter Rauhofer, or Chris Cox from Thunderpuss. These few guys have been around for years, remixing songs for dance music fans and Club DJ's. There are other remixers, but few are as well known to the scene as these folks.

You can often find compilation dance CDs with music continually mixed by them. This means there are no breaks or spaces between the songs. For you the listener it means continual dance music from the beginning to the end of the CD.

So what's hot and happening in the world of music?

Blazing up the charts on the club and radio charts are three seductive ladies from the group Destiny's Child. All three original members are back from their solo projects to make more hits as a group. Beyonce, Kelly, and Michelle are the trio forming this group. The CD is called "Destiny Fulfilled." The first single "Lose My Breath" hit the radio instantly and put the girls back on top again. The upbeat song is full of choppy beats and screaming vocals and was a big club hit.

The second single, "Soldier," portrays a more serious side of the girls and features more of their harmonizing vocals talents. Be on the look out for a few more singles to come. The CD is a must for any fan of R&B or dance music.

Another CD to check out is "Love, Angel. Music, Baby" by Gwen Stefani. You might know her from being the lead singer from the group No Doubt. The CD is full of great songs that range from a retro to progressive feel and from pop to dance. There are many guest vocalist, collaborators, and producers that contributed to this playlist. This sky is the limit for this woman's vocal talents. The first song from the CD was "What You Waiting For ." This single featured the range of her powered vocal abilities. This upbeat dance song had Gwen's vocals coming in and going out all over the song.

The CD's second release is the song "Rich Girl." This song features the guest vocalist Eve that Gwen has worked with before. The two of their voices going back and forth and together just make the song roll. With all the other people that she has worked with on this CD there are bound to be more hits to come.

The outlook for music for the New Year is off on a good note. It's only the beginning of the year, so check back to see what's happening in the music scene in Alternative Central. Email any questions, topics, or comments you might like covered in the world of music: DJBARRYB@AOL.Com.

OPEN STAGE OF HARRISBURG PRESENTS

THE CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA PREMIERE OF YELLOWMAN

WRITTEN BY DAEL ORLANDERSMITH
FEBRUARY 4 – 27

Open Stage of Harrisburg presents the Central Pennsylvania premiere of YELLOWMAN, written by Dael Orlandersmith, February 4 – 27, 2005. Don Alsedek, Artistic Director of Open Stage will direct this powerful two-character play. Opening night is Friday, February, 4, 2005 at 8 P. M.

YELLOWMAN was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in 2002. It is the story of Alma and Eugene, two star crossed lovers, who meet as children on the playground of their Southern hometown in the 1960s. Behind their youthful innocence is the internal racism that defines their world. Although they seem destined to share a life together, one thing may tear them apart: Alma is a dark-skinned African American and Eugene is light, or "yellow." As the pair matures from childhood to early adulthood, they try to reinvent themselves in spite of prejudice and past demons that haunt them. They discover, however, that there is nothing as insurmountable as the color of their skin. Orlandersmith's poetic play is a powerful dramatization of the internal prejudice that exists between light- and dark-skinned African Americans.

At the core, YELLOWMAN, is very definitely a play about racism. The parities to other oppressed groups can easily be drawn. Think of the butch-gay gym bunny who looks with scorn at the bejeweled and bewigged drag queen or the prim –and-proper businessman feeling pain at the thought of a gay rights march. Think also of Asian Americans who pay to have their eyelids reshaped, Jews with new, surgically clipped noses (and names), and Puerto Ricans who claim Cuban roots. Divide and conquer has long been the prime tool of those who wish to subjugate. It's so much easier when those who are being compartmentalized do most of the work.

Call or visit THE BOX at Whitaker Center, 717-214 ARTS (2787) for reservations.

Single reserved admission price is $22 and $18 for Seniors (60+) and students. Curtain time is 8 P. M., Thursday, Friday, and Saturday; and at 2:30 p. M on Sunday.

Discounted student and Senior rush tickets are $11 and go on sale one hour before curtain in the theatre lobby. Tickets for Pay-What-You-Will Thursdays, February 10, 17, and 24 may, also, be purchased in the theatre lobby prior to performance. There is no advance sale for Rush or PWW Thursdays.

Open Stage, 223 Walnut Street in downtown Harrisburg, is located on the street level of the Walnut Street Parking Garage, between Third and Second Streets. The Theatre's street entrance is located on Court Street. For further information call 232-6736.

For reservations, call THE BOX 214 ARTS (2787).

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Friday February 11th-
Chanel's Valentine Benefit Show 11pm

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Theatre Roundup

Panel & Vigil

York Little Theatre to Stage "Laramie"

By Christopher Tittel
Key West Correspondent

York Little Theatre will give audience members the rare and exciting opportunity to carry more than just a souvenir playbill out of the theatre and into the streets following two of seven performances of its upcoming production of The Laramie Project (2001).

The play is a beautifully orchestrated compilation of interviews and document transcripts related to the Matthew Shepard tragedy six years ago. Shepard, a 21-year-old gay student at the University of Wyoming, was savagely beaten, tied to a prairie fence and left to die on the outskirts of Laramie when what was initially thought to be a premeditated robbery quickly turned to vicious hate crime.

Moises Kaufman (Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, 1997) and members of the New York-based Tectonic Theater Project visited Laramie six times in the months following the attack, Shepard's death and the trials of Shepard's assailants. They interviewed hundreds of residents, law enforcement officials, university staff, religious leaders, students and others. The company recorded the interviews, slicing, dicing and rearranging the comments to create a play that tells the story not so much of the brutal beating of Shepard as of a small town struggling with demons both within and outside its borders following the attack.

Brief monologues from more than 60 characters bombard the audience with messages from either end of the political spectrum and all points in between regarding homosexuality, hate crimes, religion, the death penalty and sensationalist media.

Kaufman and TTP members opened the play in Denver in February 2000, moved it to New York in May 2000 and finally brought it to Laramie in November 2000.

Time magazine listed it as one of the top 10 plays of that year.The script was published in 2001.

"The experience of working on The Laramie Project has been one of great sadness, great beauty and, perhaps most importantly, great revelations – about our nation, about our ideas, about ourselves," Kaufman writes in his introduction to the script.

HBO's small-screen version of The Laramie Project, featuring Peter Fonda, Laura Linney, Steve Buscemi, Christina Ricci and a handful of lesser-known yet powerful talents, was selected as the opening night premiere at the Sundance Film Festival in 2002.

Susan Boulanger, YLT's brand-new director of artistic development, believes that The Laramie Project just may be the most politically sensitive play that the 71-year-old community theatre has staged. She sees the theatre piece not so much as pro-homosexual but as pro-humanity, as it allows the viewer to draw his or her own identifications and conclusions based on a range of perspectives.

"The Laramie Project is a big step forward for this theatre, one that I am very excited about," she said. "Theatre is a place for entertainment, but it is also a place to explore the human condition in a way no other artistic medium can. Sometimes that means taking a risk, but I think this community is up to it."

And Boulanger will give the community the opportunity to show whether or not they are indeed up to it, having organized a hate crime panel discussion for Jan. 23 and a candlelight vigil against hate for Jan. 30. Each event will follow the 3 p.m. performance of the play on its respective day. Both events will be held at the theatre and are open to the general public.

"Sadly, this play needs to be presented at this time in history because this kind of hatred and violence still exists," she pointed out.

Indeed, the FBI recently confirmed a slight rise in the number of hate crimes committed in the United States in 2003. Of the more than 7,400 hate crimes committed nationwide, more than 1,200 (including six murders) were committed based on sexual orientation.

"Hopefully, audiences will ultimately take their experience out into the world to make it a better place," she added.

Boulanger has a long theatre history, filled with directing, producing, acting and teaching credits. Her productions have been nominated for various awards on the West Coast and have drawn rave reviews from the Los Angeles Times, the Orange County Register and other press outlets.

The small cast will definitely have its work cut out for it, with each actor taking on a variety of roles, physical characterizations and vocal attributes to deliver fiery sermons, tender remembrances and icy verdicts.

Showtimes are at 8 p.m. on Jan. 21, 22, 27, 28 and 29 and at 3 p.m. on Jan. 23 and 30. Tickets are $15 for adults and $13 for full-time students and young adults.

For more information, call 717-854-3894.

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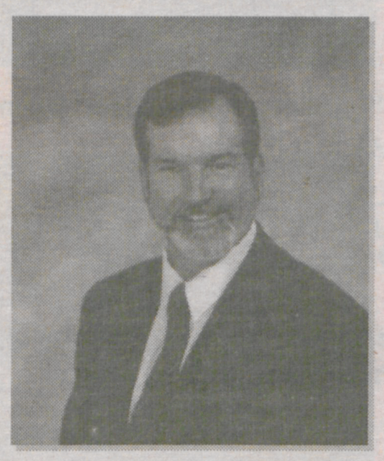

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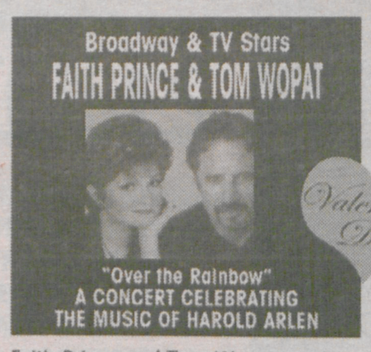


Faith Prince and Tom Wopat star in this musical celebration of the 100th anniversary of Harold Arlen's birth, one of America's most prolific composers, whose songs include "Stormy Weather," "That Old Black Magic," "It's Only a Paper Moon" and "Over the Rainbow."

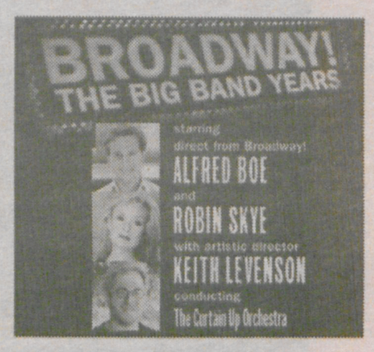
Fri., FEB. 11, 2005 at 8 pm

Tickets $48 to $30

Featuring a company of 100 singers, dancers and musicians, Opera Verdi Europa returns with Verdi's immortal tale of love and tragedy, **AIDA** (pronounced eye-E-da.) Performed with a live orchestra, **AIDA** will be sung in Italian with English Supertitles.

Sat., FEB. 12, 2005 at 8 pm

Tickets $55 to $35



During the '30s, '40s and '50s, Broadway produced many Big Band hits like "You're the Top," "Luck Be A Lady'" "42nd Street" and "Anything Goes." Broadway stars Alfred Boe, Robin Skye and conductor Keith Levenson present this new concert presentation.

Fri., MARCH 4, 2005 at 8 pm

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BOOK REVIEWS

"Tennessee Williams": Reluctant Gay Playwright

by Eric Ledell Smith

"What do ya mean he's gay?"

Among the most famous of American "gay" playwrights is Tennessee Williams, known for plays such as The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and A Streetcar Named Desir. But when you think about it, Williams didn't write any major plays with gay characters like the 1968 play The Boys in the Band by Mart Crowley or Harvey Fierstein's 1988 hit Torch Song Trilogy.

Williams' greatest works predate Stonewall and the advent of the "gay theater. Then why do we refer to Tennessee Williams as a "gay playwright?". The answer is Williams was part of a pre-Stonewall generation that some call "closeted." While "out" in private life Williams nevertheless did address homosexuality but from within the closet. A look at some of his plays and Williams' own thoughts about his work will explain why Williams can be called a reluctant gay playwright.

Born Mississippi in 1911, Williams attended college in the Midwest where his Deep South accent earned him the nickname of "Tennessee." After graduation, Williams moved to New Orleans where he lived for many years. Having struggled with his sexuality all through his youth, he now fully entered gay life, with a new name, a new home and promising talent. Williams claimed "I was late in coming out and when I did, it was with one hell of a bang." It was in New Orleans where Williams first encountered homophobia: he was assaulted while leaving a bar in the French Quarter. Writing in his journal, Williams said: "For the first time in my lie was struck, not hard enough to hurt anything but my spirit. Close shave."

Williams discovered a different form of homophobia in the American Theater where any overt or positive reference to being gay was taboo. So gay playwrights like William Inge, Edward Albee and Williams were forced to find a middle ground between their experiences as gay men and the conventions of mainstream (straight) drama in America. Treatment of "homophobia" was a way Williams managed to make references to gay life while appeasing straight theater audiences.

In the play Cat on a Hot Tin Roof Big Daddy's son, Brick, can't act out his feelings for Skipper for fear of being ostracized by society. At the same time Brick is married to Maggie for whom he has no sexual desire. He tries to blame Big Daddy for his problems. "You call me your son and a queer. Oh! Maybe that's why you put Maggie and me in this room that was Jack Straw's and Peter Ochello's, in which that pair of old sisters slept." Brick lashes out again at Big Daddy's effort to bring him out and he feigns outrage. "Big Daddy, you shock me! Talkin' so causally about a thing like that!" Later Brick thinks of Skipper and laments "why can't exceptional friendship between two men be respected without being though of as Fairies?" The core of Brick's character is the conflict between homosexual desire and society's ideals of masculinity.

Homophobia emerges again in the play Suddenly Last Summer where Mrs. Venerable fears that disclosure of her son Sebastian's homosexuality might damage his reputation as an artist. In the play Sebastian's cousin Catherine witnesses his murder by the teenage boys Sebastian had exploited sexually. Yet Mrs. Venable is in denial about her son's sexuality and tries to get Catherine lobotomized: "Cut this hideous story out of her brain!" Williams is brilliant at portraying society's horror and fear of homosexuality.

The more Williams became successful as a playwright, the more critics attacked his plays. Some thought that his plays were "too gay." Referring to the roles of "Amanda Wingfield" and "Blanche DuBois, it was said that these characters were really meant to be male. Williams was defensive about his work as a playwright. "We are not trying to imitate women," said Williams. " We are trying to be comfortably assimilated by our society." But paradoxically Williams himself encouraged this misinterpretation. He was often quoted as saying "I am Blanche DuBois."

Like many of his generation, Williams tried to "pass" as a straight playwright. He said he never wrote a gay play because "there would be no producer for it." Toward the end of his life, Williams came under attack because he had no plays with gay characters. That was untrue. The 1972 play Small Craft Warnings has as main its character a gay man named Quentin. But even here Williams fell back on stereotypes by representing Quentin as a fop or flamboyant. As gay or queer theater emerged in the 1970s and 1980s especially with dramas about AIDS, Doric Wilson's TOSOS Theater, Charles Ludlam's "The Ridiculous Company," and the plays of Harvey Fienstein., Williams seemed out of touch with the times. In an interview with the newspaper Gay Sunshine he argued that "I'm not about to limit myself to writing about gay people. I would be narrowing my audience a great deal. I wish to have a broader audience because the major thrust of my work is not about sexual orientation."

So "What do ya mean he's gay?"

If plays dealing with homophobia and life in the closet do not qualify as gay theater, then Williams isn't a gay playwright. It is only on the basis of Williams's sexual orientation that we call him a "gay playwright," many would argue. But few would argue with the fact that Williams was brilliant in presenting the internal conflicts of society about homosexuality through unforgettable plays about Southern decadence.

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Book Review

Is "Down Low" Real, Imagined, or Exaggerated?

Publisher's Note: When J. L. King appeared on Oprah, all hell broke loose. He exposed the secret of some African American men who live double lives. One life involves sex with wives and girlfriends, the other sex with men.

No one would – or should – care, except that the sex with both groups the sex is often "unprotected." Some say unprotected sex explains skyrocketing HIV infections among African American women. The black community's fear and rejection of gay men fuels an epidemic. Some black church leaders condemn their gay brothers as immoral, in spite of the fact that many gay black men in the 1960s fought diligently for their larger community's civil rights.

To be fair, not all black leaders shun gays. Unlike shunning black ministers, many too young to remember their own community's civil rights saga, more sage leaders like NAACP Chairman Julian Bond, and Al Sharpton embrace gay civil rights. "I can't say to them, 'Thanks a lot. But when it comes to you, I am drawing a line,'" explains Bond, ticking off a list of gay freedom fighters who include Bayard Rustin, "one of the leading lights," who was a top adviser to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and organized the catalytic 1963 March on Washington.

Secrets Kill

The closer a secret is kept, the more powerful the impact once it is finally revealed. Such is the case with author and activist King's intriguing look at the lifestyles of black men who sleep with other men but do not consider themselves to be gay. These men live "on the down low," the "DL" for short. Their sexual activities have gained significant notice as the rate of HIV/AIDS infection in black women has skyrocketed, with the vast majority of cases coming from heterosexual sex.

King is a veteran of the DL himself. His book serves as a psychological survey of the other men he has surveyed and as a highly candid memoir. King was well regarded in his community, popular at his church, successful in his career, and married to a woman who had no idea that his secret life existed. But when she caught him in a lie and with another man, the marriage collapsed and King's long and painful path to self-awareness began.

Among the more intriguing elements of On the Down Low are the peculiar approaches men on the DL have to the sexual act, seeking a strictly physical sexual relationship with their secret male partners while remaining in more traditional arrangements with women.

Though the infection statistics make the DL a huge public health issue, King is not a sociologist or a medical professional. Therefore, a more clinical look at this issue is welcome. Even so, King does provide insights into a world so many have worked so hard to hide. *Reviewed by John Moe*

BOOK Review

Information provided by Forever Books, 41 N. Front Street, Steelton (939-5507), Central PA's only gay & lesbian bookstore.

Naughty Little Secrets

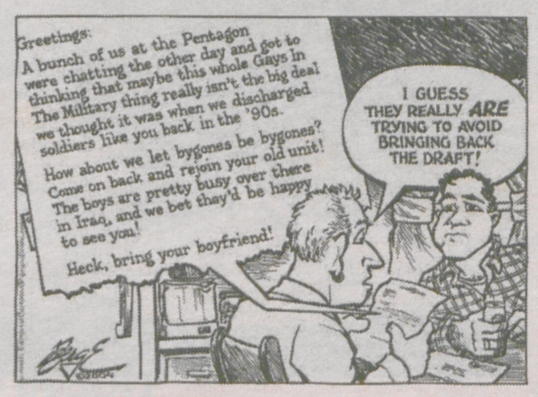
Author: Mary Wilbon

When ex-cop Slick and her girlfriend Laura'a butler tells them a dangerous secret right before a huge party, the girls find themselvs in the middle of madcap "killer" comedy!

Mortal Companion

Author: Patrick Califia

In this gender-bending chiller, Lilith is the sex slave of vampire Ulric,whose undead sister, Adulfa, intends to seduce Lilith as part of a vicious revenge plot.


Greetings:
A bunch of us at the Pentagon were chatting the other day and got to thinking that maybe this whole Gays in The Military thing really isn't the big deal we thought it was when we discharged soldiers like you back in the '90s.
How about we let bygones be bygones? Come on back and rejoin your old unit! The boys are pretty busy over there in Iraq, and we bet they'd be happy to see you!
Heck, bring your boyfriend!
I GUESS THEY REALLY ARE TRYING TO AVOID BRINGING BACK THE DRAFT!

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8	Saturday	8 PM	Queer As Folk Party*
9	Sunday	4 PM	Women's Book Club*
12	Wednesday	7 PM	Men's Discussion Group*
15	Saturday	6 PM	Wine Tasting Party*
16	Sunday	2 PM	Men's Love or Lust*
20	Thursday	7 PM	Movie Night
22	Saturday	9 PM	Promotion at Stallions
23	Sunday	2 PM	Women's Love or Lust*
29	Saturday	All Day	Coffee House Party
FEBRUARY			
3	Thursday	7 PM	Movie Night
9	Wednesday	7 PM	Men's Discussion Group*
12	Saturday	8 PM	Queer As Folk Party*
13	Sunday	4 PM	Women's Book Club*
17	Thursday	7 PM	Movie Night
19	Saturday	9 PM	Promotion at Stallions
26	Saturday	8 PM	Queer As Folk Party*

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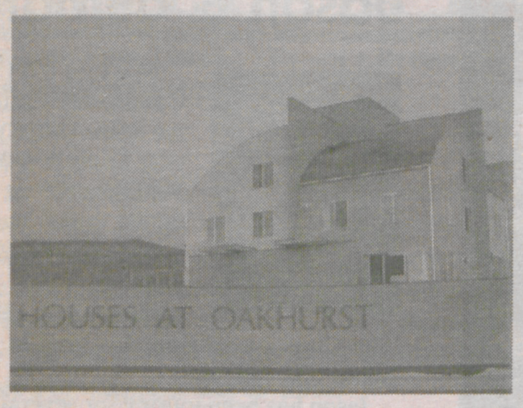

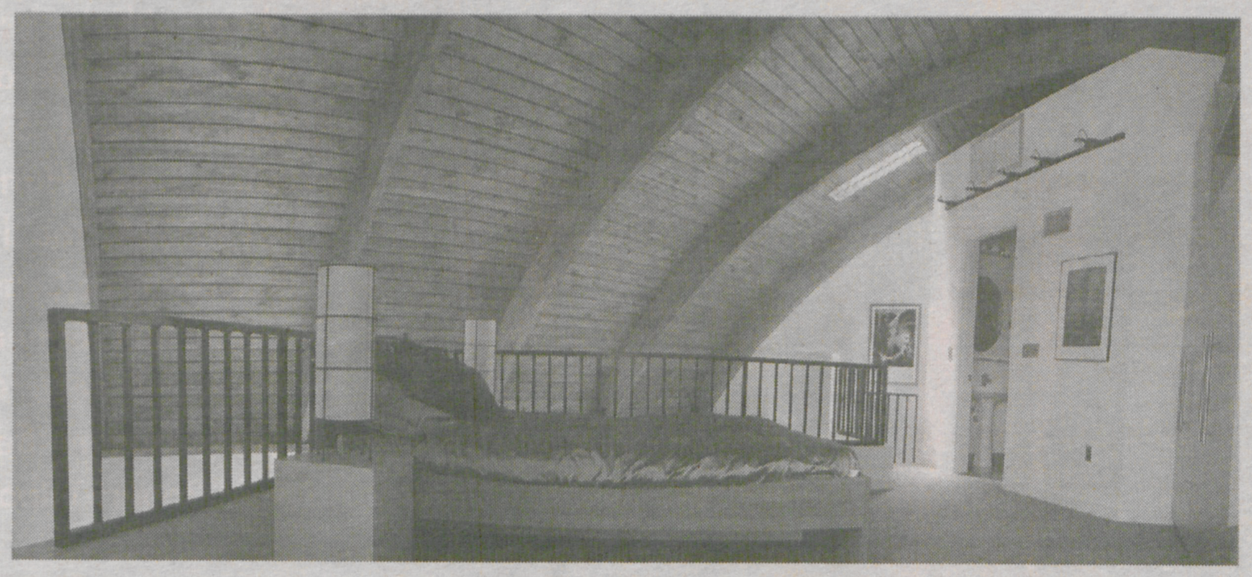

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MCC presents Jason & deMarco

Metropolitan Community Church of the Spirit (MCC) presents Jason & deMarco February 27 at their 10:30 a.m. worship service and in a 7 p.m. concert at 2973 Jefferson St., Harris. The Christian-singing duo sang to a full house one year ago.

Jason has been touring for several years now performing in various venues around the country. Jason's spiritual background has been reflected through his music over the years. He toured with the professional Christian Contemporary recording group TRUTH in 1996. Later, he joined and toured with a group called THE SOUND in 1997 and 1998. After moving to Los Angeles in 2001 that he met deMarco and the two quickly realized the possibility of a duo sensation.

deMarco's passion for singing began at an early age when he would fill the house singing songs taught to him by Catholic nuns. He discovered a love for music and theater and studied both at a performing arts school, and later at York University. He has been making waves performing in concerts, festivals, and clubs in Los Angeles and across the country. He has been active in both the music and acting industries and his face has been seen on several commercials nationwide. After touring in Italy as the lead vocalist in a theatrical production during the summer of 2002, he returned to Los Angeles where he and Jason began planning their first tour together.

In December of 2002, they introduced their Christmas program entitled "The

continued on page 21

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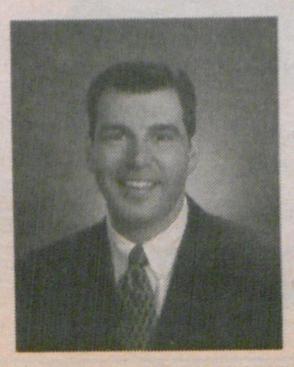

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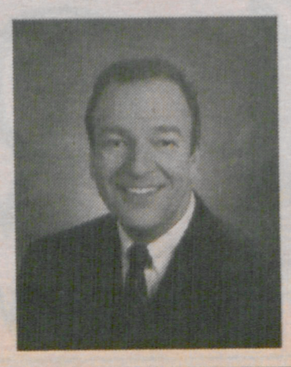

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MOVIE REVIEW

Gay Indy Film Themes Vibrant • Reviewed by Kevyn Knox
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Boys Don't Cry (1999, Kimberly Pierce, USA)

A gender-confused brilliant performance by Academy Award winner Hilary Swank is central in this overtly erotic and shamelessly frightening artistic triumph. Swank plays a young girl who pines to be a boy, and dresses the part, even fooling his/her new girlfriend, played with swirling emotion by Chloe Sevigny. Tragic in both its style and outcome, is not for those who just want mere light fun - a deep psychological tour-de-force.

Prick Up Your Ears (1987, Stephen Frears, UK)

Clever chameleon Gary Oldman plays the wickedly acerbic Playwright Joe Orton, in this brown-toned English Bio-Pic. The film is a fascinating, if not completely foreboding, diatribe on the life of a beautifully ugly madman extraordinaire.

Six Degrees of Seperation (1993, Fred Schepisi, USA)

For those of you who only know of Will Smith through his days on The Fresh Prince or in his popcorn movies Men In Black and Independence Day, then get ready to be shocked, and maybe aroused. Smith, in his film debut, plays a streetwise con-man searching for his real family - and as an added bonus, you get to see a lot of Big Willie.

High Heels (1991, Pedro Almadovar, Spain)

Since Almadovar's newest, and greatest, Bad Education, isn't on DVD yet - but hopefully you can catch it in theatres - I give you High Heels, a candidly pompous look at the stage queens of Madrid's seedier side of life. Beautifully filmed with the garish pomp & circumstance we've come to expect from Pop-Auteur Almadovar, this is one of his lesser-known films, but one that should not be missed. And don't forget about seeing Bad Education with the bulging talents of Gael Garcia Bernal - in theatres now!!!

Kevyn Knox
www.thecinematheque.com

But not here

Film Festival Gives Voice to Black Gay Community

If what starts in California usually moves East, can we expect greater visibility for the region's gay, African-American community?

To date, the region has witnessed three gay & lesbian film festivals, two Jewish film festivals, and its first Polish festival, all held at Harrisburg's Midtown Cinema and all organized by representatives of those respective communities. To date, no member of the local African-American community has commited for 2005 to plan a festival for that community-straight or gay.

In contrast to Harrisburg, Oakland's local black gay community appeared in full force at the Parkway Theater for the Oakland International Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Film Festival. Amidst rejection by black churches and civil rights leaders, there's a new movement to bring black gays more visibility and respect.

"One of the problems is when you see gays on TV they are only white," said Jasmyne Cannick, a Los Angeles-based producer for "Noah's Arc," a new black gay TV series being pitched to networks, including Logo, the all-gay network being planned for January by Viacom, which owns CBS.

About 20 percent of blacks in Oakland consider themselves gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, according to a 2000 survey by the International Federation of Black Prides. In terms of the number of black gays in cities, Oakland ranks seventh behind New York City; Atlanta; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; Detroit and Chicago, said Earl Fowlkes Jr., the organization's president.

Despite the sense of community that can come with numbers, problems persist.

"It's still much more difficult for blacks to come out of the closet than whites, even in the so-called liberal Bay Area," said Marshal Owens, who attended the film festival, where the lines were long and the lobby was packed. "Blacks still have a lot of issues in our community when it comes to sexuality and masculinity." In central Pennsylvania, the same "head-in-the-sand" phenomena occurs.

Others said many blacks still live on what is called "the down low" - having relations with members of the opposite sex and keeping their other affairs hidden. Some community leaders say this may be tied to the growing rate of AIDS among black women. But gay activists say that's an unfair assertion because AIDS is no longer a "gay disease."

The cast of "Noah's Arc" includes Dwen Curry, a native of Detroit who moved to Oakland and opened a hair salon. Among his clients have been rappers Eve and Ja Rule, and singer Mariah Carey.

"I got involved with this project because of the lack of black gay characters in today's gay television programming," Curry said. "I also want to flourish as an actor."

He plays the role of Romeo, a fashion designer.

"'Noah's Arc' uses humor, pathos and insight to gives the black gay community a voice," said Patrik-Ian Polk, the project's director and writer.

Black gays in Oakland say they remain targets of violence and ridicule, and even houses of worship in the African-American community are not places to turn to for help.

"Most black pastors are liberal on social issues except this one," said Paul Franklin, who is gay and lives in East Oakland. "They are against same-sex marriage, and when I say this is a civil rights issue, they hit the roof and say I have no right to mix the two.

"For them, the Bible says what I'm doing is wrong, but I thought we were all God's children."

Market Place

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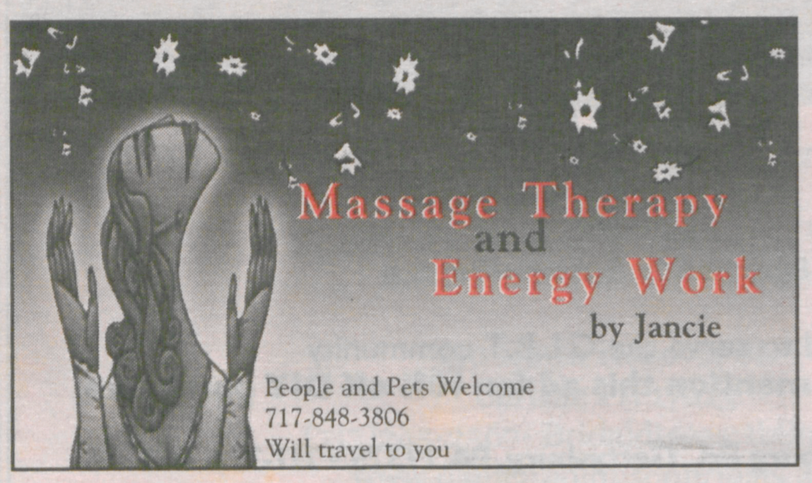

Uganda Fines Radio Station for Gay Interviews

The Ugandan Broadcasting Council fined a radio station $1,000, ordering it to air a public apology for interviewing gays seeking civil rights in that African country. Radio Simba aired the interview during a program on minority rights.

The council accused the station of defying the country's Electronic Media Act, which prohibits any broadcasting that is contrary to public morality. It also said that Radio Simba contravened Uganda's Penal Code Act, which stipulates that homosexuality is illegal in the country.

The program was "contrary to public morality and is not in compliance with the existing law," the council's chair, Godfrey Mutabazi, said. Information Minister Nsaba Buturo defended the measure saying Ugandans wanted to uphold "God's moral values". The two gay activists interviewed would not be prosecuted Buturo said, but "we are not going to give them the opportunity to recruit others".

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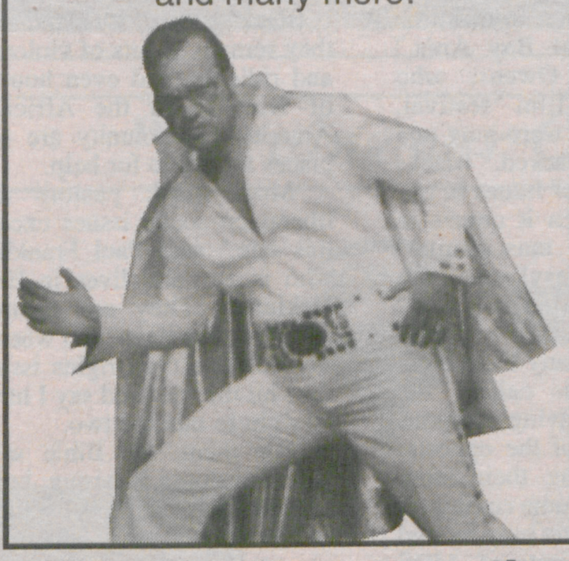

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Most HIV-positive Reducing HIV Transmission Risks

Most HIV-positive gay and bisexual men are taking steps to reduce the risk of transmitting HIV to their sexual partners, according to a study by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Between May 2000 and December 2002, the CDC surveyed more than 1,900 gay and bisexual HIV-positive men who have sex with other men. The men surveyed said they were 3.5 times more likely to use condoms when having sex with HIV-negative partners than when having sex with other HIV-positive men. They were also significantly less likely to have insertive anal intercourse (IAI) with their HIV-negative partners.

Howard Grossman, American Academy of HIV Medicine, told PlanetOut Network the new data shows that most IV-positive men are making "rational choices," and it dispels a stereotype that gay men tend to engage in reckless sexual behavior.

"We've been getting this message that somehow gay men are irresponsible in spreading HIV and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases)," he said, "and this survey shows men do care and they are taking some precautions. Additionally, 31 percent of the men surveyed reported abstaining from sex for the previous year. Among those who were sexually active, 35 percent reported having only one partner.

"This is positive news from an HIV prevention perspective," Lynn Schulman, New York-based Gay Men's Health Crisis, said about the study findings. "We must remain unwavering in our commitment to ensuring that the prevention needs of gay and bisexual men living with HIV are salient, reinforced and sustained over time."

Despite the data detailing that safer practices are the norm, some of the men surveyed said they continued to engage in behaviors that place their partners at risk. Of the men who reported having insertive anal intercourse, 14 percent had unprotected intercourse during their last sexual encounter with a negative partner, while 25 percent had unprotected intercourse with a partner of unknown status.

The CDC concluded that the findings underscore the need to help HIV-positive individuals maintain safer behaviors over the long haul. The study did not address risk of spreading STDs other than HIV through oral sex. The survey found 85 percent of sexually active men surveyed had oral sex during their last sexual encounter.

Market Place

deMarco continued

Spirit of Christmas." They continued touring together, announcing their Songs for the Spirit Tour 2003. In conjunction with the tour, they released a duo cd entitled "Songs for the Spirit" featuring traditional favorites, and also included several original songs they wrote especially for the album. Since, they have completed their third cd together, entitled, "Spirit Pop", which is the long anticipated mainstream cross-over acoustic pop cd many have been waiting for.

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Common Roads - Youth group. Ages 14-24.
Social/Information/Support. Social activities every Friday eve at 7:00 P.M. 1300A North 3rd St, Harrisburg. Email: info@commonroads.org. Website: www.commonroads.org. Voice: 717.920.9534.

Gay & Lesbian Organization of Reading & Allentown -P O Box 541,Bethlehem , PA 18016, non-profit social group for adult men & women, singles & couples. 1 or 2 activities each month including potlucks, bowling, movie nights, hikes, dinners, etc. Email: glorain-pa@aol.com.

Harrisburg Gay Men's and Women's Volleyball -
Social/Recreation. Every Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Baughman United Methodist Church, New Cumberland Cost: $2.50, Contact: Jim at 233.3172.

Harrisburg Women's Rugby Club - Looking for players for summer and fall league. No experience necessary. Email: rugby-dog34@aol.com.

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Pennsmen. Leather/Levi/Social. Membership is open to anyone over the age of 21 with an interest in the lifestyle. Meetings are held on the second Sunday of each month at the 704 Strawberry. Contact: Steve at 717.232.3785. Website: www.pennsmen.org, Email: jesjames71@comcast.net.

Pride Festival of Central PA -
Planning meetings. Meets second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m., Volunteers welcome. Email: info@harrisburgpride.org. Website: www.harrisburgpride.org. Voice: 717.234.0328.

The Rainbow Bowling League -
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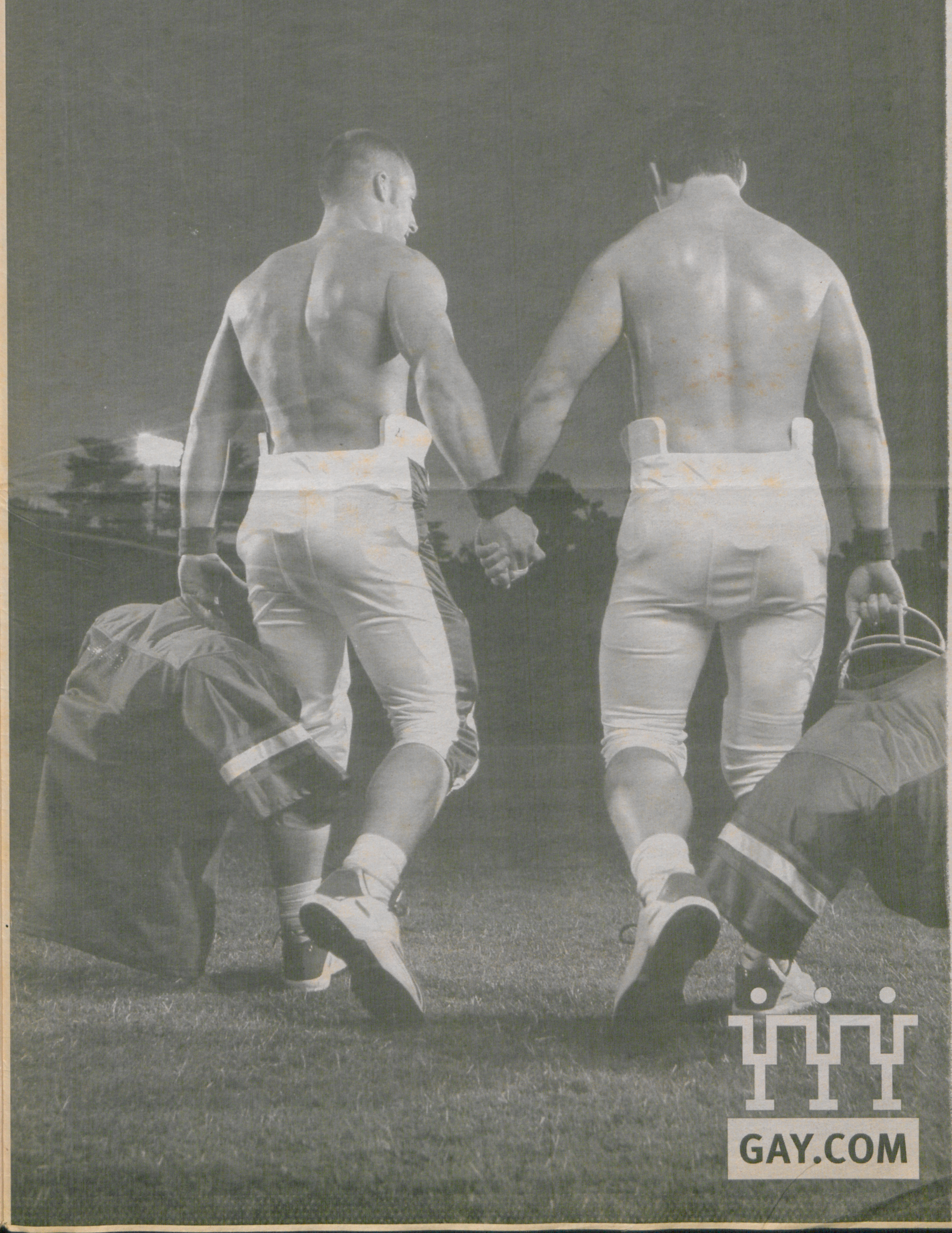

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